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THE HILL MOWING

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BY

RODERICK STEBBINS

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THESE essays, which tell of our happy days at the Hill Mowing, were written during the last two summers of his life. Although he had not prepared them for publication, they are printed as he left them.

The record in these pages of days that are gone is so precious to us that we want it in permanent form, and we are eager to share the volume with all who will read the words with understanding hearts.

All the essays were written at his desk in the upper chamber, where he had only to lift his eyes to see the mountain. He read each one aloud to us, and as we read them over now, we can almost hear the tones of his voice.

We can share with you nothing that is more precious to us.

EDITH ENDICOTT STEBBINS
RODERICK STEBBINS
HENRY ENDICOTT STEBBINS

MILTON
Easter Day, 1928

THE HILL MOWING

You will look in vain on any map for the name or the place. It is written only on our hearts. Nevertheless it is a real place and once upon a time it was a real hill mowing. High above Eagle Pond, the farmer and his family used to toil up the mountain road and mow the grass that grew on the five acre piece. It made the best hay on all the farm and the children liked to see their father and the hired man mow the grass with strong level strokes of the scythes and later, when it was dry enough, rake it into hay cocks and put on each cock a large square of stout cotton cloth fastened at the four corners with stakes driven into the earth. The children called these coverings 'night-caps,' but they well knew that they were to protect the new mown hay from thunder showers that might come any time, day or night, before the hay could be pitched into the hay carts to be driven down the hill and safely lodged in the hospitable barn.

The big white birch tree under which the children played and under whose cool branches they kept the water for the mowers to drink is still standing, a beautiful feature in the landscape. It forms a part of the frame for the marvellous picture, but it is smaller than it used to be, shrunken with age, for the things I am telling you happened over half a century ago and white birches are not long-lived. Every spring when we return to the Hill Mowing from the noise and confusion and crowds of a twentieth century city, we expect to see our beloved tree laid low by the fierce and cruel storms that sweep across the spot where we have had the presumption to build a house. We are steeling our hearts against the calamity, for, although as yet we have been spared, it is certain to come. We remind ourselves as we mount the hill after an absence of eight or nine months that if the birch tree has fallen, back of it is a group of five magnificent oaks which we do not ordinarily take into consideration. When the inevitable comes, the oaks will win a place in our affection and will

help to frame the picture which now the birch sets off so well.

When we bought the Hill Mowing many years ago, we did not know it by that name. Long before, it had ceased to be a mowing. The farmer had acquired a richer piece of meadow land, 'the interval,' he calls it, and so the hill mowing was abandoned and turned over to the cows for a pasture. They revelled here for many summers, if such sedate and dignified creatures as cows can be said to be so hilarious as to revel anywhere. But have I not the classic couplet to bear me out,

> 'The festive goat and pensive cow
> Hilarious hop from bow to bow'?

However, I know they had a good time, as do now the chipmunks, the field mice, the woodchucks, the porcupines, the squirrels, the foxes, and the deer. None of these wild creatures disturb the strawberry vines which in some years bear their clusters of pendant red berries in such profusion that one has to be careful where he steps lest he crush the luscious fruit by his

ruthless foot. The wild strawberry, in its perfection, is the most beautiful of all wild fruit, and to gather the crimson berries is a romantic experience. I know nothing that has quite the charm of pushing away the grass and the leaves on a sunny hill slope and coming upon a bunch of wild strawberries where each berry hangs by a separate stem from a central stalk. There is a similar charm and a somewhat similar sense of surprise in finding the field mushroom, the campestris, in some old upland pasture, for we have mushrooms, too, at the Hill Mowing, but on the whole I am inclined to think that strawberrying as we know it in the mountains, is more delectable than mushrooming.

The blueberry bushes, both high and low, thrive and bear much fruit. Even when the crop fails elsewhere in New England, our fields are colored with them. If we wished, we could gather bushels and market them for enough to pay our taxes, but somehow we are not in a commercial mood when we are at the Hill Mowing and the marts of trade are far from our thoughts. But we do have a grasp on

things material sufficient to enjoy blueberries and milk and crackers for supper, and blueberry muffins for breakfast from July to October; not the tasteless muffins you get at hotels and restaurants with a blueberry here and there, just enough to warrant the name, but muffins made mostly of berries held together with a little flour, a little baking powder and a good deal of cream and butter. There is nothing better for breakfast and you can have them at the Hill Mowing for three months in the year and not get tired of them.

It was by the sheerest accident that we discovered the Hill Mowing. For years we had haunted real estate offices and farm agencies for a little old fashioned house on the top of a mountain and at the same time on the shore of a pond. All the realtors — they were simple real estate agents then — laughed us to scorn. In the first place they said that we could never find a little old fashioned house on the top of a mountain and in the second place ponds in New England were in valleys and not on hill tops. However they failed to persuade us to

buy any of their offerings, none of which came near our hearts' desire.

So we wandered summer after summer, renting a house here, boarding there, but with our eyes always open for the possible little old fashioned house on the top of a mountain and on the shore of a pond. Of course we never found it, but one summer in our wanderings from our 'own hired house' we came upon a beautiful spot that satisfied us in every way except that on it was no house. It was on the top of a mountain and at the same time it was on the shore of a pond, a geographical situation which we had been told was a natural impossibility. The thought came to us that though we could not build a mountain nor create a pond, we could erect a house! It was an obvious thought but it was thrilling to us. We made our bow to the realtors who said we could not find the house we wanted on the top of a mountain and on the shore of a pond, and it was now our turn to laugh *them* to scorn, for we had actually discovered the place that met all our dearest wishes.

We approached the farmer with fear and misgiving and were not surprised to find that he was not enthusiastic about selling the land to us. We would not have been enthusiastic if we had been in his place. In fact I do not think we would have been as tolerant of the idea as he was. We did not press the matter, but after a few days, he opened the conversation himself and said that he would sell us the land we wanted provided we could agree upon the price. There was no difficulty about that and then came the question of boundaries. The land on which we had set our hearts was on the southwest end of the farm and therefore did not seriously break the unity of the farm as it has descended from father to son. But the north and the northeast boundary had to be determined. Near where I hoped the line would be drawn were two magnificent granite boulders, each as large as a small house. Around their bases grew brakes and ferns and blackberry vines, and their surfaces were covered with delicate lichens that made them look like grey velvet as the sunshine, filtering

through the neighboring maples, played upon them. Our omnivorous desires coveted those boulders, and we said so. Could not the line be drawn so as to include them in the purchase? There was silence. It was only a few seconds, but it seemed moments to us before the farmer replied, 'I just can't seem to let both the boulders go. Why, they are among the earliest things on the farm that I remember. When I was a little tot, knee-high to a grasshopper, my father used to bring me to these rocks and lift me up to the top of one of them, and there I seemed so high that I was in heaven. I was in heaven, in a certain way, a way I have never been in heaven since I was a boy. I will let you have one of them, but I can't let you have both.' It was our turn now to be silent in the presence of memories altogether sweet and lovely. Who were we, anyway, interlopers from the city, not only treading upon what to others was holy ground, but actually presuming to think that such holiness could be bought? So the boundary line was drawn between the two boulders and one of

them became ours. We like to think that in the course of the years that we have owned it, it has become holy ground to us also, for on it and around it and over it, our boys have played summer after summer. They called it their 'peace place,' where in their Indian warfare the opposing braves met to smoke their pipe of peace.

One day the older boy, who has a bit of music in him, came to the house and wrote some strains which he named after his favorite resort and which he played for us on his violin. We were sure then that the memories that for the farmer had clustered about the place we had not desecrated.

But we really bought 'The Hill Mowing' because of the view from the spot where we set our house, framed, as it is on one side by the old birch and on the other by a cluster of maple, oak, and dark spruce trees. We can see a bay of Eagle Pond which in quiet weather reflects the trees on its wooded banks. We can even see a canoe glide across the surface or an amateur fisherman angle from a flat bottomed

boat, for pickerel and perch and bass. The wind sometimes whips up this mountain pool into quite a sea, and the reflections yield to tiny waves flecked with white. Beyond several rows of intervening hills, another pond glimmers in the distance. We see the white church spire and some of the houses of the village that hugs its shore. We say that at this distance it reminds us of an English village. But why need we go so far afield to describe its beauty? A New England village has a loveliness all its own and need be compared for beauty with nothing but another village like itself.

Beyond the village rises the mountain, 'glorious minster builded to the Lord.' It is the commanding feature of the landscape and while we are in its presence the commanding influence in our lives. We have read many poems inspired by this mountain, most of them both strong and beautiful as if the strength and beauty of the mountain itself had found voice in the words of the poets, but we have found nothing that so nearly meets our mood as we look across the rolling hills to the village and

the mountain beyond as do these lines by Witter Bynner. He calls the lines, 'Grenstone,' and he does not tell where 'Grenstone' is any more than we divulge the secret hiding place of 'The Hill Mowing.'

'I face the ancient mountain
And the little modern town,
Monadnock over Grenstone,
And my head bows down.

'It's like old-fashioned praying;
To let the forehead bend
In suddenness and silence,
And to find the town a friend,
And to be upheld by a mountain,
Till troubles end.'

Again I find Witter Bynner voicing our own thoughts when he asks,

'Is there such a place as Grenstone?'
Celia, hear them ask!
Tell me, shall we share it with them? —
Shall we let them breathe and bask

On the windy, sunny pasture,
Where the hill-top turns its face

Toward the valley of the mountain,
Our beloved place?

Shall we show them through our churchyard,
With its crumbling wall
Set between the dead and living?
Shall our willowed waterfall,

Huckleberries, pines and bluebirds
Be a secret we shall share? . . .
If they make but little of it,
Celia, shall we care?

Our view is not a great view if great refers to extent. There are many views from the surrounding hills that compass far more than we can see from ours, and on some of these hills men have built houses and rejoice in the real magnificence of nature that lies stretched before them. We do not envy these sensational views, and neither do these other men envy our quieter and more restricted scene. That is one of the charms of this part of the world. What each one of us has he counts without envy and without too much pride as the best. We admit that there are

other glories of nature which we can not command, but on the whole, whoever we are and wherever we live, we prefer our particular corner of this part of the world.

We are not artists, my wife and I, and we did not know why, the moment we saw the view from the Hill Mowing, we fell in love with it. We were unable to analyze it into its separate parts, until one day an artist of reputation came to see us and explained the beauty of the scene by saying that in the foreground, the middle distance and the background we had all the elements of a perfect picture, each part beautiful in itself and each also in perfect relation to the other two. So let it be. We are not sure that we love it any better now that we know why our judgment was correct, but we do like to think that we are more intelligent.

Sometimes the air is so clear that the mountain seems but an arm's length away and we feel that we might touch the 'topmost ledges gray and bare.' Again, a mist lies between us and shuts the majestic presence from our eyes. On the first morning that this happened after

we had built our house one of the boys came running to me and almost with terror in his voice cried, 'Father, father, the mountain has gone down!' When it has 'gone down,' then the ravines between the nearer hills are filled with mist and we can see the interlacing and the folding of these wooded slopes as if they were woven together to make one world out of many parts.

At twilight the hermit thrush calls his flute like song from the neighboring trees and is answered far in the distance as by antiphonal strains in some vast cathedral. We have heard him early in June, but by the middle of August he is silent and a glory is taken from the air. Scarlet tanagers may make a mark of fire as of a comet across the sky, the towhee may repeat his insistent call, the song sparrow may trill his lovely note, but nothing takes away the regret that we shall not hear again the hermit thrush until another ten month is gone.

THE BUILDING OF THE HOUSE

When it came to building even such a modest abode as we wished, there was a difficulty. How could lumber be brought up the long steep hill where there was nothing more practicable than a cow path! There were, to be sure, traces of the old county road long since abandoned. A new road had been built around the hill rather than over it, and this left the old turnpike to its own resources of birch and maple and beech and oak. It made good use of the time and the path of the old cart wheels was so obliterated by the forest that only an expert could tell that a way had ever gone where now but a tangled growth of trees and alders and ferns held sway. Rocks and small boulders lay all around that could be had for the handling. Many of these stones with lichen and moss on them, stained by the rain and the snow, the sun and the heat, and weathered by centuries, were built into a huge chimney. The farmer said he thought the chimney would

take all the stones on the farm and he hoped it would.

The immediate problem was how to get the lumber for the house up the roadless hill. The farmer was resourceful and optimistic and said that with a little cutting the old road could be made passable for a lumber cart. So it proved and that is the only road up to the house to-day. We leave the Ford, our sole concession to the ways of the modern world, at the foot of the hill, and walk the remaining distance with that 'sense of overcoming and surmounting and that sentiment of victory and peculiar exhilaration which waits on every hilltop attained.'

The farmer is a consummate jack-of-all-trades, but the ordinary epithet, master of none, does not apply to him. He can set a pane of glass or assemble a gasoline engine. He can drive a yoke of oxen or drive an automobile. He can build a canoe or build a house. We wanted him to build a house and he set to work in good earnest. We had plans drawn by an architect who chanced to be near and

the farmer, with neighbors to help him, had the roof on before the early November snows. It was the greatest piece of luck that a saw-mill was near by so that lumber could be procured with the least possible delay.

Of course we were impatient to see what progress was being made, so in the depths of winter we decided to take the train from the city to the station, four miles distant from the farmhouse where we were to pass the night.

The farmer met us in an open sleigh and drove us to the foot of the hill up which we immediately climbed. The snow crackled under our feet and icicles sparkled on the trees. The thermometer was near zero and a sharp wind was blowing, but there stood the house, or at least enough of it so that we could see what it was to look like. A little like a Swiss châlet, with overhanging eaves, we realized that it would finally fit into the landscape as if it had grown there. In spite of the cold, the carpenters were at work on the interior and they had made themselves fairly comfortable. A huge place in the center of the house was left

vacant for the chimney which could not be built until the weather was warm enough to prevent the cement from freezing.

We walked from room to room, first from the broad piazza into the living room with many windows commanding views on all sides, then to the dining room and the kitchen, and upstairs into the three bed rooms. When we actually came to occupy the house we added to its size by having a tent where the boys slept and by building a shed in which there was another comfortable chamber, so that we always had room indoors or out for our family and our friends.

It was a very different scene from that which we looked upon when we bought the Hill Mowing. Then all was warm and green and waving and gentle, now all was cold and white and still and severe. There was a stern beauty to the landscape, however, which only a New England winter can show. The mountain, flecked with white, caught a real Alpine glow as the sun drew near its setting. The pond was a clear sheet of ice so inhospitable

that it required all our imagination to picture it as the friendly pool on which a few months ago our canoe floated so lightly. The icicles reflected the rainbow hues of the setting sun and the boulders shrouded in snow looked like friendly ghosts who had paused a moment to view a world clad in white like themselves. We were abundantly rewarded by the experience in the present and by the expectations for the future.

After a night at the farm, the farmer and his wife took us for a sleigh ride on Long Pond. The Pond, a mile or more distant, was frozen over from bank to bank and for its length of full seven miles. Right towards the middle of it did we drive over its frozen surface where before we could venture only in boats. It was incredible that this was the same place where we had rowed and fished. It seemed another world. The horses carried us along over the smooth, glassy ice at a rate which our boats had never attained. We travelled like the wind and if it had not been for furs and buffalo robes, and hot soap stones and mittens and

mufflers, we could not have endured the cold. As it was, we were not sorry when we were once more in the warm kitchen at the farm and had something hot to eat and to drink.

The next summer we moved into the house amid great excitement caused by the arrival of the furniture, and the gasoline engine that was to pump the water from the brook, the gigantic rain-water tank which was to be a reservoir of safety if the brook ever ran dry, the building of the platform for the tent and many other delightful experiences. But alas for the weaknesses of human nature, with all we had we were not satisfied! We had no door step such as all the houses in the neighborhood had. We wanted an old slab of granite which would give just the finishing touch that we thought the house needed.

Where and how to get it became our next absorbing problem. There are many abandoned farms in this part of the country, and many houses are going to rack and ruin. In some the ridge pole is tottering to its fall, in others the roof and walls have actually col-

lapsed. We searched amid these ruins for such a door step as we wanted and at last we found a 'perfect beauty.' It was on the old Tavistock place, miles away from the Hill Mowing, but it was not quite clear who owned the Tavistock place now or with whom we could make a trade for the stone. The Tavistocks had all died out or had moved away, no one knew where, long ago. They were a queer lot anyway, shiftless and poverty stricken to the last degree. They had a great *flair* for going to funerals, but *flair* was not the word that was used by those who remembered their one dissipation. Whenever there was a funeral, far or near, go they did. They had to borrow everything from a horse and wagon to carry them, to the clothes they wore. They used to borrow in turn from the various neighbors. They would ask one family to lend them what they needed for the funeral this week, and if a funeral came the following week they would apply for an outfit from another neighbor. Each neighbor dreaded when his turn came, but none ever refused. They all would stand

at the window and see the Tavistocks go by and they could always tell who had lent the clothing for this particular funeral. 'They must have got their things of the Wilders today,' one neighbor would remark, and add, 'I wonder why Jenny lent her best dress. Her old black would have been plenty good enough and more suitable. And doesn't Al look squeezed in Willie's pants? If that boy continues to grow, they'll have to find a larger man than Willie to borrow from.'

Tradition says that one of the boys went west and became a judge and that one of the girls became a public singer, but beyond that all trace of them is gone. Old man Tavistock used to brag about these children and say, 'They never would 'a' done it but for me. It is all owin' to their pa's advice.' But it was probably the mother, as is so often the case in similar instances, who gave the children their inheritance and ambition, both frustrated in her but revived in some of her offspring. Tavistock used to brag about her 'edication.' He always had something to brag about and he

would say that she was three years in a 'cemetery' before he married her, and when she died he continued to brag that 'nobody'd ever want ter see a finer lot o' mourners. Not a scaley one amongst 'em.'

When we looked at the door stone, we thought of the mother and of the boy who grew to be a judge and of the girl who became a public singer, and we forgot all the sordidness of the past. It was not difficult for us to imagine the sacrifice that the mother was called upon to make, the losing struggle against the shiftlessness of her husband, the final centering of all her ambition in her children, and we trusted she lived long enough to see her hopes for them fulfilled. Tradition said that she herself had a beautiful natural voice and that had she had the opportunity to cultivate it, she might have been one of the great singers of the world. We exaggerate the possibilities of lost opportunities, but however that may be, we like to think that the mother's voice lived again in the voice of her daughter and all was not lost in poverty and shiftlessness.

Finally we found some one who thought he had the right to sell us the stone for four dollars, and one winter's day after the snow was packed hard, a sledge drawn by two oxen brought the stone to the front steps. For a few years it looked new and strange but now the white clover grows close about the edge and the door stone seems to belong to the Hill Mowing.

CHILDREN OF THE HILL MOWING

It rains sometimes in torrents at the Hill Mowing. It always has and it probably always will. Now when the rain is driven by a high east wind across the face of the mountain, when the trees are lashed by the storm, when the windows rattle and the gutters run full, we look out into the drenching rain and we see in imagination as we saw in reality long ago, two little figures clad in yellow rain coats and helmets, looking for all the world like two Uneeda Biscuit boys. They are going down the hill, hand in hand, to bring up the milk from the farm, and in a half-hour they will return each with a bottle of milk swinging from his hand. Weather does not matter to them except as affording some particular adventure. On pleasant days they wander as far as they will through the surrounding fields and groves and thickets with only the restraint that they must remain within hearing of their mother's voice when she calls through the megaphone. This

she does from time to time, so as to keep them on the leash, so to speak, but so far does the sound travel, that when the call for dinner is given, fifteen minutes or more must be allowed before the rangers can reach the house.

Rangers they are, in truth, for they travel far and know every tree and every rock and every hillock and every depression, while the streams mark for them the way through some of the otherwise impassable wilderness. They have named a place here, a mossy nook there. A huge sloping rock shaded by a magnificent maple, they call 'Monadnocken.' This is evidently a diminutive and a term of endearment derived from the presiding genius of the place. Once when we older folk were entirely lost and quite without our bearings as we came down the side of one of the hills that flank the Hill Mowing, the boys exclaimed, 'Why this is Japan and over there is China, we're only a little way from home,' and through these foreign lands they led us safely back to our doorstep.

Back of the house is an open stretch which

was a fine place to build boats, and automobiles and houses out of the packing cases in which some of the furniture arrived. Long mornings and afternoons were passed in making these marvellous structures. What mattered it if the automobiles never went and the boats were not sea-worthy and the houses were too small even for the littlest boy to stand up in, the fun was in the building of them. The object attained was not so interesting as the process, the goal not so absorbing as travelling the way thither.

Down in the ravine, under the shadow of a great rock, with the help of the boys from the farm, they built a shelter of branches and leaves as a trysting place for the 'Maidenhair Club,' so named because the only clump of maidenhair fern known on the farm grew near. Elaborate laws were drawn up for the correct management of the club and for the conduct of the members. We found these laws written in pencil and now so dimmed by time that they are scarcely legible. They run like this:

'MAIDENHAIR CLUB LAWS'

I. All members that do not obey club laws will be put down to next position. The person in that position shall be raised to the first position of the outlaw.

II. The president can not vote, unless in executive committee. If equal sides, draw lots. (enforced without president's signature.)

III. No person should talk while others are speaking. (not enforced.)

IV. That President Jones should work harder & do more work than any of the more pronounced ranks.

V. The president must keep the house in *perfect* order. He must be the very best boss.

VI. The president should have a speaker & a subject ready for the speaker on every Monday or Tuesday.

VII. The president should have whatever games the club plays, ready. It is his own business.

VIII. Club laws can not be voted for by the executive committee.

IX. People if passing on the club road must keep to the right.

X. All members of the Maidenhair Club shall be their duty to see these laws enforced including the president And of the more pronounced ranks.

signed Mr. Newton Jones,
president.

The duties of the president of the United States seem small compared with the duties of President Jones!

The games of the Maidenhair Club were as varied and as esoteric as were the laws. The record of outdoor games reads: 'Squirrel, giant, monkey, cowboy and indian, exploring, poison, robber, hunter, kneel before the image, soldier and animal.' The record of indoor games is no less alluring. 'Gessing, I yes or no, animal gess game, Tell-stories, conversation, lectures, funny lectures, jokes, cat's cradle, string work, Flie Kid and singing.'

The club was evidently addicted to card playing for a list of card games comprises 'Diamonds, muggins, beat, shoot, coseno, everlasting, slap-jack and Old maid.'

There were poets in those days at the Hill Mowing and the special brand of poetry manufactured there was called the 'anniemannie,' one word but derived, so the boys said, from Annie Mannie, the originator of this style of verse. 'The History and Poems of Annie Mannie' still exists in manuscript. This is the first time it has appeared in print. It is as follows:

'Annie Mannie was born in 1503. Her parents have been traced back but nothing was found about them except that they were worthy people. When Annie was a girl of 12 she was very fond of making up poems for her younger cousins. She was clever in learning any kind of literature. In 1520 she had a little class of girls and boys which she taught poems. In 1523 she was engaged but her fiansee died and she never married.

'Her father had a book store and one day

when they were at church, the store burned down and Mr. Mannie was so depressed that he died. So Mrs. Mannie and Annie had to get work for themselves. Then Annie Mannie began composing poems and got money that way. She wrote what is called a "common anniemanny." Here is an example:

"The Cow and the sow said
How
Shall we flee."

This is an anniemanny rymer

"Everything did flee
From the sands of D
Ah me!"

What she probably meant was that

"Every thing did flee
From the sands of the desert."

'When Annie Mannie grew older she wrote bigger poems like

"Gratefulnesse.
"Thou that hast given so much to me
Give one thing more a grateful heart,
See how thy beggar works on thee
By Art."

(Annie Mannie evidently was familiar with George Herbert.) Another one, the title unknown, is as follows:

"There no monstrous fancies shall
Out of Hell or Horror call,
To create or cause at all
Affrighting"

'She wrote a play called Annie Mannie and after she was dead Abradeen wrote the music for it.

'The End of the World is one of the very best books she ever wrote. My life in the Country is another, the introduction is:

"I love the Country Home
Where I just have to roam
around."

'She was born in Greenwich, England. During her lifetime she went to America a good deal to get ideas for the End of the World.

'The life of Annie Mannie that she wrote herself is carefully preserved in London.'

The birds at the Hill Mowing were a joy then as they are now. At night we can hear the

far away call of the whip poor will, and glad we are that it is not nearer, for too close, the call gets on our nerves. Sometimes across the hill from the great pond, a mile or more away, the eyrie song of the loon can be heard and its less melodious laugh. An eagle sometimes sails over our heads, and the hawks fly lower as they look for their prey. Owls hoot in the dusk so that we thought, until we knew better, that hounds were baying across the ravine. Once or twice we have had the exquisite pleasure of finding the nest of the hermit thrush built amid the long grasses on the ground and containing three lovely eggs of greenish blue. We have watched the nest until the eggs were hatched and the fledglings flew. Then we have drawn a breath of relief that these most beautiful of all woodland singers had escaped the snakes and other enemies that lie in wait for them.

Perhaps our most intimate relation with any birds was with a nest of cedar waxwings. It was so unusual that one of the boys wrote it down and I give it just as he wrote it:

'Last Friday August thirty-first Mr. Kehoe came to cut down trees to clear our view. In one of the trees we found a bird's nest with three small Cedar Waxwings occupying it. Unluckily we did not find the nest until after the tree had been felled. We left the birds in the fallen tree, hoping that the mother would find them. We left them there all that night. The mother could not find the nest, but we saw both the parents in the large spruces near where the tree had stood. We were afraid that the mother and father would go away, not being able to find the nest in the last twelve hours, so we got a basket to put the nest in and hung it in the tree. I dug worms and fed them to the little waxwings. When night came we took them into the livingroom and fed them milk through an eye-dropper. It was well that we took them in for there was a terrible thunderstorm. The following morning we moved the nest on the piazza so that the birds could get a little sunlight. There was a large box in the shed divided into two compartments by a partition. We put some excelsior in one com-

partment and moved the little birds into it. The only food that was fed them was worms and milk. I got tired getting worms so we gave them flys, which they enjoyed. They needed a bath because the milk that they did not get into their mouths had gotten caked all over them. We warmed some water and put them in. I do not think they enjoyed it very much. We kept them in the house two nights and then father suggested that we put them on a rock under an apple tree that stands near our house, as they were peeping quite loudly. The father and mother heard their peeping and found them, much to our joy, because it was getting to be quite a burden to feed them and do our other work too. We were quite surprised that they, (parents) came back, as the junkos, (a little gray bird that nests on the ground) leave the nest if anything like what happened to the Cedar Waxwings happened to them. We know this because there is a great quantity of these junkos here every year and almost every season we find a nest.

'We watched the mother feed the young

ones and watched them improve. We are still watching them. They were out of their nest and on one of the limbs near their nest this morning.

'When we found them they were not able to stand, and when we put them on the rock they could stand and were interested in life because they were always turning their heads.'

The lad was right about the junkos' nests and he might have told of the particular one we found once on the path that leads to the pond. Our attention was attracted by the alarm that two junkos evidently felt and the cries they were making in the trees overhead as we passed by. We thought at first that they were afraid of us, but so many times had we been by the spot that we began to look a little more carefully into the matter. After a short search we came upon the nest with four little birds just hatched. On the edge of the nest was a snake with its mouth open just ready to strike. This was plainly the cause of the parent-birds' distress. The boys, quick as a flash, were at the snake, but it was quicker

than they, and it disappeared in the undergrowth. We waited a few minutes and decided that now all was safe and the older birds would return to defend the fledgelings. We supposed that when not taken unaware they must have some way of protecting their Lares and Penates. So we went our way. On our return we stopped to look again at our little protegés and there was the snake again and there were the unhappy birds voicing their anguish from a neighboring shrub. The boys were this time quicker than a flash and with a stone dispatched the marauder while their mother held him pinned to the ground with her hat pin. But it was too late to prevent the tragedy, for the nest was empty and we could see that the snake's maw was full. This was too much for the littlest boy who, brave when the situation called for action, but quite overcome when the inevitable had to be faced, threw himself on a bank of moss and sobbed out his heart in unison with the pathetic twitter of the bereaved birds.

LONG POND

It is a carry of about a mile or a mile and a half from Eagle Pond to Long Pond, not a difficult carry because it is not through the woods but on country road. We have made a truck of two discarded cart-wheels and by placing the canoes upon this, the journey is made very easily. We keep our canoes on Eagle Pond for take it all in all it is the more friendly sheet of water. It is much smaller to begin with, about the size of Boston Common. The west wind can whip up quite a pretty sea on it but nothing to what it can do on Long Pond when it takes its full length of seven miles. Eagle Pond is a gentle pool most of the time and if a canoe should capsize it would be a simple matter for the occupants who can swim to reach the shore, and for those who can not swim, why, the catastrophe might be sufficiently near the banks to allow them to wade to dry land. Eagle Pond is eminently safe and that is why we keep our canoes and our boats

there. A sail can be made out of an old sheet and fastened to a birch pole and the whole anchored to one of the seats by a rope, and behold, you have a sea-worthy craft as alluring as the *Hispaniola* of Stevenson's 'Treasure Island' and quite as capable of thrilling adventures. At least so the boys thought when they were little. To be sure this pirate ship was prone to run aground on 'sandy beach' and father had to come to the rescue. It was hard work to keep her rudder true particularly when there was no rudder. She was likely to list badly to the starboard and her lee scuppers would run full. We tried very hard to be nautical and you see how well we succeeded. Then she would ship water and ship sand and have to be baled out and whatever is done to sand under such circumstances would be done, but we never knew how to express ourselves. Words simply failed us and we as simply tried to clean out the boat.

This would be one of those ignominious defeats that could quickly be turned into victory by turning the tables and saying that in a

peaceful country a pirate craft ought to suffer wreck. It would not take long, however, to clear up all vestiges of the tragedy, and the ship, once more a conquering pirate would sail gaily away for imaginary encounters in the secluded coves and inlets of this little sea. So we keep our canoes there but on bright still days we take them over the carry to Long Pond and start off on a regular adventure. There is just enough possibility that the wind may rise and make canoeing a trifle difficult to give a sense of daring, but when we start out the reflections in the quiet waters banish all thoughts of any trouble.

Long Pond looks a good deal like a river, only there is no current. We slip our canoes, laden with all manner of good things to eat, into the water. That is, they are so laden if Mr. and Mrs. Bolton are with us, and they generally are when we venture forth on Long Pond, for Mr. Bolton knows all the rocks and the shallows and Mrs. Bolton can talk thrillingly about a sunken island and can point to where it raises its head only a little way out of

the water in what appears now to be a reef. Years before she was born, her great uncle, so the story goes, cut all the timber off the island and left it to its fate. Perhaps broken hearted because it had been shorn of all its beauty, the island never lifted its head again and gradually it sank lower and lower until it disappeared from sight save for the ledge which, as if in protest against the injury wrought upon it, the island uses as a warning that it wants nothing more to do with mankind and trespassers had best beware.

We paddle quietly along in the shade of the overhanging trees or if the sun is not too hot, we strike out into the open lake where there is less danger from rocks, and our paddles have a freer sweep. We may startle a flock of wild ducks that with a cry of alarm rise from the water and in helter skelter fashion try to seek some place of safety. A loon will laugh at us in derision for our temerity in poaching upon his preserves and for imagining that we can ever be so much at home as he upon the waters of the lake. Then he will laugh again and just

to show us how far superior he is, he dives out of sight and appears again far beyond and laughingly calls out 'Don't you wish *you* could do that?' But we know we can not, so we proceed a little more humbly because of our mere man's estate.

We approach 'the narrows' between the island and the shore. It was here that I caught the first large fish I ever caught in my life and up to the present time the only one; and now the salmon trout are jumping tantalizingly all about us and we wish we had brought reel and line. I did take them once. My friend the farmer and I were in the canoe alone. We had started on a prospecting trip and with no thought of fish, at least on my part. It was when I knew the woods and the ponds less than I do now and I was discovering for myself the beauties of the country. While we were paddling, the fish began to jump and the farmer said in his casual fashion, 'I've some fishing tackle here. We may as well try our luck.' 'All right,' I agreed, 'but if there is any luck it will be yours. Fishermen are born and

not made, and no one could ever make a fisherman out of me.' He caught a few perch for bait and then gave me a line and reel. He took a similar one himself and with one hand on the paddle he cast his line and told me to do the same. Far, far in our wake, the lines stretched behind us. Now and then a nibble, occasionally a real strike broke the monotony. Nothing actually happened until I said *sotto voce*, 'I believe there is something on my line.' 'By George,' exclaimed the farmer, 'it looks like a huge salmon trout. Now be careful you do not lose him. Play him! Play him! Tire him out! Reel in! Now let him have the line! Let him think he is getting away with it. That's right. Now you can reel in again. Keep the line tight. Tighter, tighter, I say.' The farmer was getting a little excited, nothing, however, compared to the condition that I was in. I had never before been on one end of a line with a big salmon trout on the other end. 'There, that's better,' he continued. 'I think he is getting tired out.' I was sure *I* was. I thought the fish would stand it

longer than I. Gradually, however, he made smaller and smaller swirls. He did not bolt so far afield. I succeeded in drawing him close to the canoe. He looked simply immense in the water. I thought I had never seen so large a fish and I doubted if Jonah ever had. Now the question came how to land him. We had no net and if we attempted to drag him aboard by the line, he was quite certain to get away. Finally I drew him so close to the canoe that the farmer with a skill unmatched in fishing annals reached his hands into the water, caught the fish with his fingers through the gills and tossed him triumphantly into the canoe.

Strange to say on closer observation in the canoe the trout did not look so large as he did in the water. I rather expected that he would fill the canoe and we would have to get out. He was, however, a good sized fish. He tipped the scales at six pounds and a half. I was eager to take him home to show to the family. I knew that they were sceptical of my qualifications as a fisherman and if I simply told them about the size of the trout they would

good naturedly turn it off as a fish story. So home the fish must go to prove my case. I had intended to make a visit of two or three days but the afternoon train saw me winging my way to the city. I had the fish in a box covered with mayflowers. I presented it to Gail as a box of flowers and said nothing about the fish. When she discovered it she exclaimed as I knew she would, 'Where did this fish come from? You do not mean to say that you really caught this fish yourself?' I modestly replied that I did catch it and moreover that I had returned sooner than I expected in order to bring it to her, for I feared that if she did not actually see the fish she would never believe what I said about it. A little hurt, I thought, she answered 'Have I ever doubted your word? Don't you know that I always believe everything you say?' Then with a hug, 'I should believe anything you said even about a fish!' I saw at once that my return had been unnecessary and I might have remained the other two days. Why didn't I and catch two more fish just like this one?

But I have been digressing. Let me see. Where were we? Oh! yes, we were going through 'the narrows' and the fish were jumping and that put me entirely off the track. We are under way, however, and the canoe is gliding swiftly over the placid waters and beneath the summer sun and cloud to our lunching place. We have chosen among many possibilities, the island pasture, situated on the summit of the island which is a small mountain in itself. The climb is fairly stiff because there is no good path and the way up is a scramble through thick undergrowth. The cows who must be descendants of those who laid out the streets of Boston have made paths here and there, but they apparently lead nowhere and woe betide him who thinks to reach the summit by following any one of them. He had better follow his nose and get his bearings from the sun.

When the island pasture is finally attained, it is worth every effort, a large, level, open space dotted here and there with fine oak trees. A few sleek cattle with soft and dreamy

eyes look at us with characteristic curiosity and then return to their grazing or cud chewing. The view that has drawn us is nothing to them. They do not know what they miss for the scene is one of the loveliest in the neighborhood and even to our prejudiced taste almost if not quite equal to that from the Hill Mowing. Do not think for a moment that we are disloyal to our own. We are merely broad-minded enough to see beauty even if it has not our particular hall-mark upon it. Before us to the south we can see three or four miles on Long Pond which sparkles and trembles in the sun-light. In the lee of a tiny island here and there, the summer clouds are reflected in the clear water and a wild waterfowl can see itself mirrored in the lake. Beyond the far reaches of the pond Monadnock rises, a solitary and transcendent glory. It is far enough away to seem clothed in purple garments more magnificent than emperor ever wore. To the north and east lie Rollstone and Crotched and Blood, fairly good sized mountains every one, and to the west lies the mod-

estly named City Hill, of the many cellar holes, the blueberries and the scraggly apple trees. Why it should be called a Hill when it is next in height to Monadnock in all the country round, and far lesser peaks are called mountains, is one of the peculiarities of the New England taste in names. Possibly the original settlers on City Hill thought that they would seem too remote if they said they lived on a mountain.

I should like to own the island pasture if I could. Now this is not because I am covetous and want to own the earth, but there is a rumor that a syndicate is negotiating for it and if successful, a large summer hotel will be built upon the spot. I would like to save it for better things. Summer hotels are excellent in their rightful place but I am sure that one on the island pasture would be an anomaly. The people who would visit it would not half appreciate the surrounding beauty. They would dance and play bridge and listen to the radio, all worthy pastimes in their way but their way does not naturally lie amid these solitudes of

nature. I should like to have the island pasture so preserved that men like Witter Bynner, 'David Grayson,' Charles Brooks, Edward Newton and Christopher Morley would come there. I have not the privilege of knowing any of these gentlemen, but I am sure that none of them would ever see the island pasture if a summer hotel is built there. Let us forget this dire possibility and lie there on the grass under an oak tree and enjoy the prospect while we may.

The shadows are growing longer and if we want to gather wild raspberries across the pond we had better be on our way.

Several years ago some lumbermen did their worst and left a huge pile of sawdust near the shore. Nature resented this outrage and did her best to repair the damage by causing a profusion of raspberry bushes to grow where the forest once was. It is just the time for the fruit to be at its best. We paddle in our canoes across the pond and there we find the berries in their perfection. We pick and pick and fill every available receptacle. So absorbed are

we that we do not see the gathering clouds or the oncoming darkness. We continue fatuously to pick and to pick. Finally the rising wind can no longer escape our attention. Is it rain or is it only wind? It does not really matter much for the wind alone has stirred up such a sea that the timid are afraid to venture in the canoes. What shall we do? A night in the open faces us, with raspberries as our chief article of food. It might be a great deal worse, we philosophize. But there are difficulties and inconveniences in spending the night, particularly if rain should come. We think longingly of the clean sheets and the warm blankets at the Hill Mowing, but without avail. We decide to make the best of it and to be as cheerful as we can. The water is really too rough, it would not be safe with our little skill to venture in the canoes. Accordingly we set to work to build a fire. The blaze is cheerful and the warmth is agreeable. 'When does the sun rise?' some one asks and an intelligent and hopeful member of the party guesses that it rises about four so the night will not be very

long. 'But it is not night yet! the sun hasn't even set' another pessimistically remarks. It is evident that the enthusiasm for spending the night in the open is not general. 'Why don't we try to find our way home through the woods before it is actually dark' suggests the one to whom clean sheets and warm blankets have the strongest appeal. We all agree as this was evidently the dearest wish of our hearts, and pulling the canoes further on the shore we strike into the pathless woods. If we can keep to the shore of the pond we shall be all right. As long as it is light enough to see the water through the trees we can not lose our way. So we trudge along walking faster and faster as the darkness grows more and more dense. Finally it is so dark that we can not see our hands before our faces, much less the edge of the pond which was to be the arrow that would direct us to safety. It soon became plain to each one of us that we were lost. We kept on, however, hoping against hope that we might come to the road. No road appeared. The woods were pitch-dark. We

never knew what pitch-dark was before. It is not pleasant to look upon if you happen upon it when you do not know where you are. For a second time we settle down for the night and we build another fire. By this time the stars have begun to appear and the woods are not so gruesome, but the wind continues to blow. We cheer ourselves by telling all the funny stories we can think of and not one of them is the least amusing. We raise our voice in song about seeing Nellie home, and that our bonnie lies over the ocean and what fun it is to ride in a one horse open sleigh. Ancient lyrics, every one of them, and they make us wish that we could see Nellie or anybody else home, if we could see home ourselves, and as for Bonnie over the ocean, he might better be there than where we were, and if a one horse open sleigh were to be had, for love or money, we were sure we would charter it even if it were mid-summer.

Finally as the night wore on Mr. Bolton, our guide, philosopher and friend grew nervous, frankly, and not to say obstreperously, nerv-

ous. He declared that he was sure he could find his way out if he were unencumbered by our marching host. He would go for help, he would find it and he would return. We bade him godspeed and off he went. His departure made us sadder and our funny stories became more lugubrious than ever and our songs actually melancholic. Mrs. Bolton was a brick. Hard as it was for the rest of us, far harder was it for her to see her husband go into the unknown. But she did not falter and she was the first, as rightly she should have been, to see the glimmer of a lantern coming nearer and nearer to us. The tiny light grew brighter and finally Mr. Bolton himself emerged from the darkness with the welcome news that he had been right in thinking that we were near a house. He had found it, borrowed a lantern and what was more there was a lovely young woman waiting on the pond with a motor boat who would take us safely to our landing.

We scurried through the woods and across the swamps as fast as we could in the dim light of the lantern. It was wonderful how bright

it really was in contrast with the surrounding darkness, and when we reached the shore, we all piled into the motor boat, which made nothing of wind and weather, and were landed safely, as we were promised, at our beach.

It was one o'clock in the morning when we reached the Hill Mowing, but we all voted the adventure a great success and we would be willing to repeat it if for no other reason than for the enjoyment we had of warm blankets and clean sheets.

SUNDAY

Sunday at the Hill Mowing is different from other days. Not that we do on other days what our consciences would not allow us to do on Sundays, at least I hope we do not, but almost in spite of ourselves, the day is set apart. Always still, except for the rustle of the leaves in the trees or the patter of the rain on the roof, as it may chance to be, on Sunday there seems to be a more pervasive stillness. It must be only seeming and the difference must be entirely within ourselves. I have sometimes wondered in case we forgot it was Sunday if there would be anything in the world around us to remind us of what day it was. In the course of the morning we should hear the church bells from the village at the foot of the mountain, and, if the wind was right, the bells from the church in the opposite direction, but until these gentle and far off peals broke the silence, if we did not remember, we should probably go on with our berrying, our wood-

chopping, our mowing or even our washing if it needed to be done and we should commit no sin. However it is always borne in upon us when Sunday comes. Whether it is from the inside or from the outside, we will not inquire too carefully. The wind has a different temper and stirs the leaves more gently, and if the rain falls, its drops are like the still dews of quietness. The mountain seems more like a temple and the clouds are as a veil that hides the infinite mysteries. So we would make the day meet our mood, if it be but a mood, and seek to satisfy that desire to be in communion with the divine which marks every human soul at its best.

When the boys were little and before the days of the Ford, as we could not walk to church, we had our own service on pleasant days on the piazza or under a neighboring pine. We likened ourselves to the Pilgrims at Plymouth as we cheerfully walked to our place of worship. If it rained, we gathered about the hearthstone in the living-room, on which blazed a pleasant fire, and we imagined that it

was winter in the Plymouth colony, the snow too deep for us to venture out, so we had our service in front of the burning pine knot. Our services always differed in one respect from those of the Pilgrims, ours were always short. We read a responsive psalm, and took our turn Sunday after Sunday in being 'minister.' The passage from the Bible was read by the minister of the day and we all sang the hymns while one of the boys played the tune on his violin. We did not venture into that difficult spiritual region called extemporaneous prayer, but we took refuge in some great prayer of the ages which we either recited or read together.

When the boys grew older and were equal to the long walk, we went to our village to church. We still go, but though it is now the day of the Ford, we continue to prefer to walk. The path lies first through a grove of thrifty spruce which we mean, if possible, never to sacrifice to that abominable and ubiquitous contrivance of modern mechanical genius, the portable saw-mill. Of course the world needs lumber and I am not going to argue about it.

Only I will let the world be houseless and homeless and I will myself go to the poor-house before I will sell my forest for timber. Some person may remind me that if every one felt as I feel, there would not be even a poor-house for me to go to. All I can reply is that there are always disagreeably argumentative persons in the world.

I fear that I am forgetting this is Sunday and whither we are bound, so we will return as quickly as we can to the path through the spruces. We find all manner of beautiful growing things in the woods, according to their seasons. On the edges there will be checkerberry vines, first with their white blossoms and then with their scarlet berries. The partridge berry trails its graceful leaves across our path, various colored fungi, if the season is damp, make the forest gay with yellow, and brown and red of differing hue. The most exquisite of all such things, the Indian pipe, looking for all the world as if made of refined alabaster, springs up at our feet almost as we pass. We have had to mark

our trail by blazes on the trees, but we have done it gently and the loss of sap as it trickles down has not been enough to injure the trees. The path eventually leads to the road, a road fit for a king! 'El Camino Real' we would call it were we in California. How trippingly the Spanish falls from the tongue! The road is fit for a king only if he will lift his eyes. If he looks at the road-bed he will not deem it fit for the royal chariot, particularly if the chariot be a royal automobile, but if he will look up and not down he will see the trees meeting in an arbor over head, white birch trees, maple trees, beech trees, oak trees, all making such a canopy as royalty never rode beneath. The road soon comes to an opening on the crest of a hill where a house once stood. We ourselves can remember when it was a fair looking dwelling, but now the roof and walls have fallen into the cellar, and blackberry vines are mercifully covering up the tragedy and despair. The view, however, remains the same as when children played in the door-yard, a view of smiling fields, rolling hills, and a few houses

standing on the distant ridge against the horizon. Then comes 'the three-piece hill.' Literally it is in three pieces. First comes a short but abrupt descent where horses, when, alas, there were horses, had to hold back on the breeching. Then a little level stretch followed by a long decline, gentle rather than precipitous; then a level bit and another descent and we are in the valley, a charming bit of pasture and meadow where one or two cows graze and where the first white houses of the scattered village appear. Around a turn in the road, stands the church facing the village-green in true New England fashion. It has the rare distinction among old New England churches, of being a small church, not too large for its congregation, but it has one great defect. Yes, this 'loveliest village of the plain' has a flaw! Perhaps it seems more human because of its defect. The steeple needed to be repaired and repaired it was. Perhaps the trouble lay in lack of money. I am rather inclined to think it lay in the easier way of making the repairs or in complete

thoughtlessness. At any rate, the steeple that was once white and because of its whiteness could be seen for miles around from the neighboring hills, is now shingled and is a rusty black. The village has lost its one pre-eminent feature, and so grieved is Gail over the calamity that if she can not in any other way raise the money to have its pristine whiteness restored, I am sure I shall see her standing hat in hand on Broadway soliciting funds from the chance passer-by. She will do it and she will get the money too.

The pulpit is of mahogany, of such beautiful grain and finish that one wants the luxury of passing his hand over it, to feel its exquisite texture and to know that it is real. The form, too, is graceful and dignified. Every Sunday in spring and summer and autumn it is decorated with the loveliest of flowers. There is some one who has the artistic sense of what to do and what not to do. Never so many flowers as to be distracting, the simplicity of the decoration is one for artists to marvel at. Whatever the season may be, its appropriate wild flower

graces the pulpit. In the spring hepaticas and blood-root, later mayflowers, and later still butter cups and daisies. As the days go on, the brilliant cardinal flowers suggest the pomp of Rome, or better as Holmes has it,

> 'As if some wounded eagle's breast
> Slow throbbing o'er the plain,
> Had left its airy path impressed
> In drops of scarlet rain.'

When the first hints come that summer is passing and autumn is drawing near, purple asters and yellow golden rod help to cheer our regretful thought, and when autumn is actually here and the hills are superb in their mantle of yellow and red and the sombre green of the conifers, then the pulpit is rich with autumn coloring and on harvest Sunday the fruits and grains of the field bring their symbolism of the earth's increase. But of all the Sundays, we like pond lily Sunday best. Then carefully arranged this transcendent flower appears as much at home as when floating on yonder pond, and its unequalled perfume scents the air as incense never did.

The music is from a little reed organ, by no means adequate, and the choir is composed, as I suppose most village church choirs are composed, of a straggling and irregular number of untrained singers. They 'carry' the hymns, however, and sometimes a violin or a clarionet brings beauty to the music, or a singer adds to the grace of the service. However appealing all these parts of the worship may be, we go to church for the minister's sake, or rather for our own sake because of what the minister may say for our edification.

Is there such a thing in this self-sufficient age, as edification? Hardly do people expect or even wish to find it in church any more, but here is 'spiritual edification' at its simplest and best among these hills. Nominally we are not of the minister's theology. We are supposed to differ from him dogmatically. We have never discussed the question with him. Some of the phrases he uses are meaningless to us, but the man himself is full of meaning. Simple and sincere to the core he speaks from a genuine personal spiritual experience. Differ as we

may from him in the words in which he describes this experience, we can not doubt its reality and truth both for himself and for mankind. He knows whereof he speaks. God is the great reality, and the life hereafter the certain goal.

We can never forget a sermon we heard him preach from a text from the Eighty-Seventh Psalm, 'Of Zion it shall be said that this man was born there.' It was the Sunday after old home week and he spoke of the happiness they all had had in welcoming back some of the people who had been born in this little mountain hamlet. He himself had been born here. From this he drew an analogy of those persons who had been born into the Christian faith, who had always kept that faith and had always loved it, but if there were any persons who had not been born into that faith, he would remind them that there is always the spirit of adoption by which they may become sons of God. There are people who were not born in this village, but who have been adopted by it and now call it their home. There is also the eter-

nal home of the spirit and some time there will be a great home-coming, a gathering in the eternal home of all the sons and daughters of God.

We do not know in this sophisticated age where we might hear such a sermon as this, spoken with such directness, simplicity, sincerity and conviction. Did we believe it? We hardly dared ask ourselves. If we did not believe, we wished we did. Perhaps we were helped to believe.

The minister was born here, as I have said. He has had other settlements and now he has returned to this church and to the town in which he was born. We hope he may continue to serve both as long as he lives.

POTS OF GOLD

It had been raining steadily for almost a week. Finally late one afternoon there was staged for our benefit what appeared to us to be a veritable battle of the winds. I do not know that meteorologically any such thing is possible. I am by no means sure that winds can blow from different directions at the same time, but on this particular afternoon they seemed to us to be doing just that. The strong east wind was bringing fog and rain with it as it had for days and shutting us in from any glimpse of the surrounding country more effectively than any smoke screen. So far as our neighbors were concerned, we were as if we were not. This state of affairs continued for almost a week until upon this afternoon of which I write, a wind came blowing in from the west and the two winds met in the sky right above the Hill Mowing. The east wind did not 'go round' by the south as it should in an orthodox clearing fashion, but kept on

blowing from its vantage ground in the east and seemed to say to the west wind, 'dislodge me if you can!' The clouds piled up in huge, dark masses over head, now driven by the east wind as if they were mighty billows of the sea, and again rolled back by the west wind as if they were the ocean's retreating tide. So the contest went on with the clouds the gigantic playthings of the winds but all our hopes were centered on the strength from the west.

Finally our hopes came to fulfillment. The faint streaks of light in the west grew stronger, flashes of sun-light appeared, to disappear again, but the clouds, like a defeated army, retreated to their bivouac in the east. Then like flags of victory patches of blue sky seemed to wave above and the clouds that had been so dark and ominous, what was left of them, were soft and white like carded wool. But the east, as if to fire one parting shot, gathered together its scattered forces and poured a deluging shower upon the sodden earth. The sun, though it was near its setting, would not

now brook even a suggestion of defeat for the western wind and continued to shine gloriously upon the drenching rain. I heard Gail call that there must be a rainbow and we both hurried to the piazza and looked toward the east. There, as if to make amends for all its sullenness, the east flung out one of the most gorgeous rainbows we had ever seen. It was a perfect semi-circle of all the rainbow colors, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. Both ends of the arch touched the earth, the one nearer us reached down into the depths of the ravine at our feet, the other disappeared miles away in the waters of Long Pond. We looked in silence for a few moments, entranced by the ineffable loveliness of the scene, the dripping trees, the masses of forests on Hurd Hill, the brook swollen now to almost a torrent by the perpetual rains, and the rainbow like a fillet on the brow of Nature in her loveliest mood. I irreverently broke the silence by repeating the nursery lines,

> 'Where the rainbow touches the ground
> There a pot of gold is found.'

and Gail, in her wistful way, replied, 'If gold were what we wanted, we could have a pot of it — couldn't we?'

True it is we do not want gold in the ordinary sense, though precious little we have of it and we by no means despise the comforts, the blessings and the opportunities that it brings. But such gold has never lain in our way and we have never gone in search of it. Other pots of gold we have, though not of the marketable variety and nary a piece could buy a single necessity. Many people would not count it gold at all for it is never quoted on the stock exchange and a department store would have none of it in exchange for a button or a pin. Yet our pots of gold make the Hill Mowing rich, for their contents are scattered over all the land and sky.

Around the edges of the slab of granite which forms the threshold of our house, the big rock that was hauled up the hill by a yoke of oxen one winter when the snow was three feet deep, has grown a line of white clover which does not blossom at this altitude until

July. The flowers deck the somber rock as with a wreath of white and the whole country rejoices. So also do the bees, who come not in swarms but by some process of selection as if the queen bee chose the best honey gatherers in the hive for this special harvest field. They come in twos and threes, they test one blossom and then as if not quite satisfied, fly to the next, only to return to the first love scorned. They keep this rotation up for several minutes in apparent indifference to the richer and more brilliant flowers that grow but a short flight away. We are reminded of Emily Dickinson when she wrote in her shy garden in Amherst,

> 'The pedigree of honey
> Does not concern the bee;
> A clover, any time, to him
> Is aristocracy.'

Further down the path that leads from the Hill Mowing to Eagle Pond, in late August a thistle of faint lavender invites a black and gold bumble bee which in its eagerness for the hidden sweet pierces to the very heart of the blossom. Inevitably poets of familiar scenes

come to mind and as we pause to look we are one with Emerson when he sings,

'Burly drowsing bumble bee,
Where thou art is clime for me.'

To go back to our threshold where so many of our unpurchasable treasures come even with out the asking. One day a large yellow caterpillar walked deliberately across the smooth surface of the stone. He was not loathsome, crawly and scaly as many caterpillars are, but he was covered with a soft translucent down of the color and texture, I should imagine, of spun gold. Gail immediately saw its resemblance to a yellow angora kitten and I, for once, almost as quick as she, asked her if she remembered that exquisite poem about a yellow cat written by Margaret Sherwood, ten or fifteen years ago. She remembered it, but not well enough to repeat it. However she knew where she could find it. So she went to the file of magazines and unerringly put her hand upon the copy that contained it, brought it out and sat down to read for my delectation. She read of how the poet besought Persephone

in her twilight land of dreams to see the little golden ghost slip past and to

> 'Give one soft touch, — if only one, —
> To that uplifted, pleading head!
> Whisper some kindly word, to bless
> A wistful soul who understands
> That life is but one long caress
> Of gentle words and gentle hands.'

The caterpillar moved out of sight, but he had awakened memories of golden words.

This may seem far other than a pot of gold and if it does I can be more literal and tell you of an actual pot in our living-room, a huge copper kettle with the yellow of the copper shining through the green of the verdegris with which time has clothed it. It looks good as gold to us and the kindness of the friend who gave it to us is surely golden. We never should have bought it with our hard saved earnings, they must go for more practical things, and the kettle was of supreme usefulness once, but no longer. We picture to ourselves its original use by its first possessor generations ago and what successive owners have done with it.

It looks as old and weather beaten as Monadnock itself and has something of the same dignity that attends longevity. The first housewife into whose home it came may have boiled the family washing in it, or hung on a tripod out of doors with a crackling fire underneath, she may have made her year's supply of soap in it and when the work was finished she may have put the soap carefully in the attic where it would dry and harden and not melt away in the first use it was put to.

I often think of what we city-dwellers miss and country-dwellers also, now-a-days, which our ancestors had, the joy of living a good part of the year in the open, men and women alike doing their work out of doors where sun and wind and delightful odors from all the growing things surrounded them. Much of their recreation must have come in this way, for they had little else, and good, healthy recreation it was.

Our kettle may think that it has degenerated and long to return to its pristine usefulness, but though not eminently practical we try to appease its appetite for service by

keeping it filled with white birch logs such as are nowhere else to be found. The glint of the copper, the green through which it makes its way, the silver white of the logs make a combination of color and a beauty hard to surpass. And when the cool evenings of fall come, the logs furnish forth a fire in the stone fireplace and the golden flames send warmth and comfort through the whole house.

We have always dreaded the day when airplanes might hover around the house and we might have to draw the shades to protect us from the too curious gaze of the pilot and his passengers. The Hill Mowing offers the only safe landing field in the neighborhood. We are sure that an astute aviator would pick it out if he wished to alight. Fortunately nothing so untoward has happened yet, but we live in dread and the other day we were sure our solitude was to be thus rudely invaded. The result only goes to show how foolish it is to be apprehensive, for the actual thing feared usually turns out to be something quite different.

A speck appeared in the distance coming from the direction of Thumb Mountain, just the path that any competent airplane would follow. On it came, nearer and nearer, approaching the earth apparently with the intention to alight. 'Now we are in for it,' we exclaimed, but what mitigated our fears and gave us pause was that the object was not so large as an airplane should be and it moved without a sound. Our hearts took courage and finally so near did this silent, soaring mystery come to us that we saw it was an eagle and we could discern the white of his head, the curve of his beak and almost the piercing brightness of his eye. Far from him were any thoughts of alighting. We were the intruders and the trespassers upon *his* solitude. We had invaded his domain, and in scorn he passed us by and winged his silent mysterious way into the golden light of the setting sun. Where is the pot of gold that can purchase such a vision to the eye or such an uplift to the heart?

When we went down to the farm the following day to disclose proudly what we had seen

and felt we found our enthusiasm somewhat discounted. The whole farm was in a tremor of excitement for had not some one that very morning seen on the further edge of the pond, a buck and doe and two fawns coming to the water to quench their morning thirst? Quietly were the other residents of the farm summoned from their sleepy beds and their eager gaze directed toward the entrancing sight. They all had seen perhaps that loveliest of woodland possibilities, unless it be a bird's nest undisturbed and the eggs not yet hatched, a family of deer making its way to 'cooling streams.' We were asked if we had seen the lovely creatures but we had to confess that we had not. With a touch of sarcasm we thought, the inquiry was continued, 'If you had been up, could you have seen the deer?' We ignored the implication of laziness and replied that we might have seen them with our superior pair of binoculars which were originally given to the boys and which Gail and I have appropriated. We did not press the point, however, for with our many pots of

gold, we would not deny to others one little pot of their own.

We sometimes see northern lights streaming up as from a city set upon a hill, more beautiful in their gleam and glint and in their arrow-like shafts of illuminated color than any produced by human device. Northern lights bring visions of limitless fields of ice and snow, of the explorers who came back and of explorers who like Scott never came back. When we see the northern lights we draw a little closer to each other and the home seems more than ever better than a pot of gold.

Hurd Hill is to the north and east of us. Over its brow come some of our greatest treasures. The Pleiades rise here in the late summer night, here rise too, the harvest and the hunter's moon and flood the whole region of mountain, pond, forest and stream as with a light of another day in a different world.

Once when the moon was young, more than a crescent but not yet beginning to count its days, it cast such a glamour over our further pond as I had never seen before and have never

seen since. The moon was in just the right position for its beams to produce this unusual effect. The atmosphere, the visibility, the temperature must have been in perfect accord to create the vision that my eyes beheld. The mountain was hid in the back-ground, yet its outline could perfectly be seen. The forest was not merely a mass of blackness but through it individual trees stood out as if drawn singly by a painter's brush, and the pond looked like a quivering drop of quick-silver that the Almighty held in the hollow of his hand. The vision vanished as the moon moved on. We may never see it again, but it will ever dawn upon our inner eye which is the bliss of solitude and rival all the riches of Eldorado.

DEER STALKING

Some years the finest strawberries grow on the north slope of the farther pinnacle, but it is not always so. The wild strawberry is the most elusive of fruit. It is an aristocrat among berries and has the exclusiveness of aristocracy. It is always seeking pastures new and the moment its resort becomes commonplace, it disappears. Because the wild strawberry flourishes in a certain spot one year is no reason for expecting to find it in the same place the next. What happens we do not know. We only know that the best way to find it is to come upon it unexpectedly. It is not at all like its humble but none the less worthy cousin, the blueberry. But I suppose that really there is not a shade of relationship between them. The blueberry likes to go where the crowd goes. It likes its own kind and it grows in the same place year after year. You can always depend upon a blueberry bush.

You know, having found it once, where always to find it. This is an admirable trait in berries or in human nature, but it does not create the atmosphere of adventure.

Before we had learned all this worldly wisdom about strawberries and human nature, we started one day gaily and with confidence to the remembered strawberry field on the pinnacle. Visions we had of coral-like berries half an inch long that we could have for the finding and picking, a mere trifle. We crossed our sorry attempt at a kitchen garden where as soon as a cabbage leaf, a radish or a carrot or a beet or a lettuce leaf puts a bit of green out of the earth, it is immediately devoured by the bunnies, the deer, the wood chucks, the porcupines or whatever wild folk like to prey upon the works of man. The cows, as if remembering what was their former stamping ground, break through the fence that separates us from the neighboring pasture and come also to ravish our garden plot. We know all the time that there is just as good food on their side of the fence as on ours, but we can not induce

them to believe it. Here again is a fond characteristic of humanity.

We heaved a sigh as we looked at the devastation of the night before but without too much repining we went our way through the woods. Beautiful woods they are, cloister-like, with pillars of pine and beech and somber spruce. Our spirits rose and we forgot the denuded garden as a startled partridge whirred across our path and a thrush, thinking perhaps from its dark perch in the pines that evening was drawing near, poured forth its unapproachable song. What were cabbages or even kings compared with what we had and wild strawberries ahead of us!

We kept on our way until we came to 'the north slope of the farther pinnacle,' a rocky pasture where a surveyor once built for a landmark a cairn of stones. Our eyes met the horizon. In one direction we could see Ascutney, on the border line of Vermont. The wild and remote Stratton stood high among the Green mountains and far to the south we were sure we could see Mount Tom, while the line

of the Presidential Range, like a blue ribbon caught on the summit of Mount Washington, wavered in the north.

'Shh!' came from one of the boys. We looked in the direction in which he was pointing. There, not two hundred yards away was a beautiful doe. 'Still,' I said in as loud and in as peremptory a voice as I dared. We stood silent and motionless. Luckily the wind was in our faces so that the deer did not get our scent. She raised her head and looked calmly at us. 'What are those four strange objects up on the hillside?' she seemed to ask. She was as still as we were, until having satisfied herself that we were harmless and that she only had not chanced to see us before, she bent her lovely head and began to crop the grass. We had seen deer before in the open, in the Yellowstone and in Yosemite, but there they are protected and so tame that they will come to your tent door. Here, however, was a new and thrilling experience, a wild creature who knew and wanted to know nothing of the haunts and ways of man, a dweller of the primeval world

to which belonged all the fields that it ranged over and all the woods through which it wound its sure but trackless way.

Suddenly the doe raised her head and gave a low, gentle, plaintive cry and out of the thicket came two spotted fawns. They ran up to their mother, while we stood transfixed and entranced as if we had been admitted into the holiest of nature's secrets. We have never been hunters at the Hill Mowing.

When the fawns with their mother had had a gambol, the mother, flaunting her tail like a white flag, disappeared with them in the underbrush.

We were stiff keeping our rigid positions so long and we were glad to stoop and kneel to look for the berries for which we came. Not a berry was to be found. What had been almost a carpet of red a year ago, now was nothing but green. We had to return with our baskets empty, but our memories full of the loveliest and tenderest of sights.

'Let us go home,' I suggest, 'not by the way we came, but let us follow one of these

stone walls and see where it brings us out. The wind is in the right direction, we may see some more deer or we may find a patch of strawberries.' 'Which stone fence shall we follow?' inquires Gail in her superior tone, 'there are stone fences running in all directions.' 'I didn't say anything about stone fences, I spoke of stone walls,' I replied a little testily I fear, and I continued, 'why do you persist in calling a stone wall a stone fence, it is only a pose with you.' 'Not at all,' answered Gail in her most final manner, 'there is the greatest difference in the world between a stone wall and a stone fence. What you call a stone wall is really a fence, it is not high enough for a wall. In England they have stone walls but we have scarcely any in this country. The English build high stone walls all around their gardens so that they may have some degree of privacy and we build nothing but fences which any one can see over and most any one can jump over. Won't you acknowledge the difference and admit that here all we have are stone fences?' I do not yield to her arguments or to her plead-

ings. I have my own opinions and my own dignity to maintain. I do not care what the English do or do not do, and I intimate that sentiment. In the United States we have stone walls. They are indigenous to the country. Here in the mountains they seem almost to have grown and not to have been made. Any way, I bet the men who built them called them stone walls, no stone fences for them. Everybody calls them stone walls. Doesn't Robert Frost who knows rural New England better than we do write, 'Something there is that does not love a wall'? That is it, a *wall*, just like the one we are standing by. I suspect that I am beginning to lose my temper and am becoming just a trifle disagreeable. Gail retains her composure and I can see that my contention makes no more impression upon her now than it has in all our previous discussions about stone fences and stone walls. Life can never be dull for us while we have this perennial subject for disagreement. In fact for us life can never be dull, for we have so much to differ about.

This reminds me of a story a delightful friend of ours tells of an experience she had when driving with some English visitors. One of the English ladies failed to catch her name and asked her what it was. 'Mrs. Richardson,' our friend explained. 'But,' replied the English lady, 'that was your name before you were married, was it not?' 'Yes, it was; you see, I married my cousin.' 'Oh! how dull,' with a prolongation of the l, was the surprising and disconcerting answer. I presume that the English visitor meant to imply that being close of kin they must have little to talk about, no separate sets of in-laws to champion or the reverse, few subjects but those upon which their kinship made them inevitably one. However that may be with cousins, Gail and I are not sufficiently near of kin to lack subjects to disagree about, which makes life perpetually interesting. To begin with there is the abhorrence and the satisfaction with which each of us respectively regards cream and milk. It goes to such extremes that one has lemon and the other has cream, if cream is to be had, in

our afternoon tea. We disagree in regard to the amount of sugar we want in our food in general and we are at swords' points as to the League of Nations. Crossword puzzles and divorce find us ranked on opposing sides. Bridge and prohibition are likewise subjects of contention if we would allow them to be. One of us likes to build an open fire and the other likes to express disapproval of the way it is done by poking it after it begins to burn satisfactorily, that is satisfactorily to the one who in the first place laid it. But we largely ignore these differences of taste and opinion. They are not vital, agreement is not essential to our happiness, and they are brought to the fore only when one of us scents dullness from afar. We are on different sides of the fence or the stone wall, but on which side is not divulged. There is no secret, however, about the fence or the wall. I am all for the wall and Gail is all for the fence. I will confess that in some of these lesser matters like bridge, the League of Nations, crossword puzzles and prohibition, Gail is gradually converting me to her views,

but on fences and walls we part company, neither, I fear, ever to be won over by the other. True to my convictions, therefore, whatever further I may write about the subject, I shall call them stone walls and for this reason I hope Gail will never read what is here writ.

They run in all directions, these stone walls, over the hills, up one side, down the other, sometimes parallel, sometimes at right angles and without any discoverable direction. They are objects of real beauty with the foundation stones sunk in the earth and the top-most stones thrown by the frost and the frozen rains into tumultuous heaps. The gray and green lichens spot them here and there, and now and then amid the prevailing granite the white of a quartz rock stands out in the sunlight. For some years there has been one of these quartz rocks at the farm which was pried out of a stone wall with crowbar and main strength. It is about the size of a man's head and just the shape. It was rounded in some pot-hole centuries ago. To-day it provides a test of

strength and skill for any one who wishes to see how high he can toss it, how far he can throw it, or how long he can hold it out at arm's length.

The wonder of these stone walls is never ending. Why were they built in the places where we now find them? Sometimes two walls will run parallel twenty or fifty feet apart and we know that they mark what was once a roadway, but now the path is overgrown with trees several feet around. Sometimes we come across a perfect rectangle enclosed by four stone walls, perhaps near an old cellar hole and we know the walls mark a door-yard or an enclosure for cattle. Some of them were evidently built to clear the land of stones and to turn the wilderness into farms. Others evidently marked boundaries and are used as such at the present day. But the purpose of some we have never been able to discover. They seem to have been laid just for the fun of the laying. The people of those days had no movies to go to and few books to read. Perhaps they built stone walls just for diversion. The diver-

sion must have been hard work and there must have been plenty of hard work without diversion, so this particular conjecture is worthless. But what labor went into them! As we look critically at these New England stone walls they arouse a similar wonder in us to that we feel when we look at Stonehenge and other standing stones in Europe. How were they ever put in their places? The farmers had nothing but crowbars, sledges and oxen with which to move these boulders about and some of them weigh tons. No one would think today of moving them without derricks and elaborate tackle of one kind and another. Yet there these stone walls lie, mute reminders of an almost forgotten time even in what is called a new country, memorials of physical labor exhausting even to think about, evidences of toil to which the present generation is happily a total stranger. We look at these walls with reverence for what they represent and with wonder for the mystery in which they are enshrined. Useful for little else now but landmarks, they provide a way through the wilder-

ness of forest and brush. After some deliberation, we choose our particular way. Gail follows her stone fence and I follow my stone wall. The boys are now with one and now with the other. In this way we all arrive at the same place, the Hill Mowing, at the same time, and we have kept company all the way.

ANCESTORS AND THEIR WAYS

The people of the various villages that the Hill Mowing and the 'Pinnacle' back of the house look down upon are mostly of revolutionary stock and preserve much of the silence and austerity associated with their forebears. They do not wear their hearts upon their sleeves nor do they readily give their confidence to the passing stranger. They have an inherent self-respect and dignity that prevents familiarity and a somewhat rigid courtesy which keeps the hail-fellow-well-met at a distance. But when their confidence and liking are won, when they are assured that the visitor is in mind and heart, in purpose and in understanding like themselves, they welcome him to a friendship of which none other is more rewarding. And why should they not be reserved and self-respecting, with a touch of pride in the stock from which they have come? For by right of inheritance they are, if not the truest, then the oldest Americans. Nearly two hun-

dred men from this sparsely settled township enlisted and fought in the war of the Revolution. A bronze tablet to their memory stands in the old church-yard on the top of the hill. The church, itself, many years ago, was moved from its 'templed hill' to the village green below where it was more accessible in the storms of winter and where its bell still faithfully sounds the call for worship every Sunday morning.

The tablet begins thus:

The Association Test
April 1776
To show our determination in joining our American
brethren in defending the lives, liberties
and properties of the inhabitants of the United Colonies,
we, the subscribers, do hereby solemnly engage
and promise that we will to the utmost of our power,
at the risk of our lives and fortunes, with arms
oppose the hostile proceedings of the British Fleets
and Armies against the United American Colonies.

To the memory of
The Pioneer Settlers of Stonefield
Who signed the foregoing test
or had already taken the field,
and others coming later.
Soldiers of the Revolution
1775–1783

'Who left the ploughshare in the mould,
Their flocks and herds without a fold,
The sickle in the unshorn grain,
The corn, half garnered, on the plain,
And mustered in their simple dress,
For wrongs to seek a stern redress,
To right those wrongs, come weal, come woe,
To perish or o'er come their foe.'

Then follow the names, nearly two hundred. Some of these men fought at Bunker Hill, some joined the Continental Army under General Gates at Stillwater, while others endured with Washington the terrible winter at Valley Forge in 1777–1778.

Mute reminders of these heroes of by-gone times still exist. On the summit of the highest hill are a number of cellar holes where houses once had been. The surrounding fields show signs of having been tilled. Remnants of orchards continue to bear, but now only a shriveled and bitter fruit. Raspberry vines yield luscious berries in what were formerly the door-yards, and blueberry bushes choke the mouths of abandoned wells. Here some of the original settlers lived, and here tradition says many a Cincinnatus left his plough in the

furrow and joined General Stark's Brigade of Militia which marched from Winchester, or fought in the battle of Bennington.

The hardships of war were scarcely more severe than the hardships of daily life in those early days. The forests were dense, there were no roads and few even were the marked trees which indicated the all but pathless way through the woods. Men were often lost. When this happened, fires were built upon the hills, horns were sounded and guns were fired. Within the recollection of persons now living, a gun barrel, from which the stock had rotted, a pair of saddle bags, a compass box and a horn of powder were found near a large rock where there had evidently been a fire. Buttons such as were worn on coats and breeches of long ago were scattered about, but nothing remained by which it could be known who had perished there, whence he had come or what had overtaken him at that long distant time.

The settlers of early New England were strong, vigorous men, of great physical endur-

ance and courage as they needed to be. The settlers of Stonefield were of this type and well they were because in addition to felling trees to build their houses, cutting paths and making roads through the primeval forests, they had to protect their cattle and sometimes themselves from bear and wolves and wildcats. Even to this day the call of a lone wildcat may be heard at dusk across the neighboring ravine, but we have never heard of any animal more harmful than the fox coming within close range of any of the houses.

The tradition of wolves still survives and some of the inhabitants love to tell of one of their ancestors who went to a neighboring town and worked two days to pay for a quarter of beef which he slung over his shoulder and started on the long walk of twelve or fourteen miles home. He had not gone far when the smell of the beef attracted wolves who followed him and threatened to attack him. As a matter of precaution he cut off a piece of the beef and threw it to the wolves. They devoured it in almost one gulp and were again on his heels.

He cut off another piece but the same thing happened again, and again the wolves were at his heels. In order to save his own life, he kept this up until all the beef was gone and he arrived at home with nothing with which to supply the family larder.

Another ancestor one day in spring when there was still snow on the ground and ice formed morning and evening, started off to another town and bought two large iron kettles weighing eighty pounds each and in the kettles he placed sixty pounds of salt pork and some other heavy articles. He fastened these on his sled and started to drag this heavy load fifteen miles back to his home in Stonefield. But spring was in the air and the sun growing warm melted the snow on his track so that the sled began to move slowly and finally got stuck. This hardy pioneer was undaunted by so small a hindrance. He left one kettle and the sled under a marked tree by the side of the path and taking the other kettle on his head and the sixty pounds of salt pork under his arm proceeded to walk the remaining miles home and

then returned for the other kettle and the sled.

The houses that these men of iron constitution built for themselves and their families were almost identical in size and shape with the log cabin with which the entire nation is now familiar as the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln. Like that cabin, these first New England homes were built of logs, pole houses they called them, and the floors were like the floor with which Lincoln was familiar in his youth, simply hard-trodden earth. They had no glass for a window and sometimes not even an opening and all the light they had came through the doorway or down the chimney through the big open fireplace built of mud and straw. Some of these people who lived in Stonefield were not so fortunate even as the Lincoln family as many of the houses had no chimney at all and the smoke from the fire at which the wife and mother cooked went up through the one room of which the house consisted and out of a hole cut in the roof.

In those days women used to ride fifty miles on horseback carrying their grain to mill and

taking a young child with them. Their time was not so precious as that of their husbands who could not be spared from the work of felling trees and clearing the ground. The women also did their shopping in far distant towns and were gone a day and night or more before they could return.

It is not difficult even now to feel their sense of isolation, for we are far from department stores or stores of any kind for that matter. In our village nothing can be bought but a postage stamp and a yeast cake, and I am not sure about the yeast cake. The minister, out of the goodness of his heart, used to keep a few groceries in his shed for the convenience of his parishioners and others who might find it easier to buy of him than to take the long ride to the nearest store, but even he has had to abandon this beneficence. Neither has our village electric light nor any modern conveniences except the automobile and that seems an anomaly where all else is quiet, serene and old-fashioned. Even the telephone has penetrated only here and there.

Many of the farmers in the spring make their own maple syrup and maple sugar, and in the autumn do their own butchering and make home-smoked hams, which are superior to any packers' output.

A few years ago the law forbidding the shooting of deer was changed so that every man over twenty-one is now allowed, during the few weeks of the season, to shoot one deer, if he can. Some families depend largely upon this source for their supply of meat during the season. So when the snow begins to fly, the deer are tracked over the neighboring hills.

Our village though in some respects as isolated as of old, and as destitute of modern contrivances as it is, is not behind the times in knowledge and in thought. Sermons of fine spiritual import are preached in the little church. The daily mail brings the papers and the magazines. A charming memorial library has recently been built. The Ladies' Aid Society by suppers, fairs and entertainments does much for the social life of the town and when Old Home Day comes in the middle of August,

the returning sons and daughters bear witness to the affection that draws them back to the scenes of their youth.

But the charm of the place lies in its isolation, in its distance from the madding crowd. What our present generation needs, among many other things, is a familiarity with these quiet, distant, lovely places which the world still affords, not a familiarity that breeds contempt such as many feel who rush at break-neck speed through these sequestered ways and audibly thank God that their lot is not cast in any of these places, but a familiarity born of long days and moon-lit nights when there is leisure to enjoy the beauties that surround one and to retire into what Carl Sandburg finely calls 'the cloisters of silence.'

AN ANCESTOR WHO WENT WRONG

The name of Reed Redington could not be placed on the memorial tablet on the summit of cemetery hill and more's the pity. Up to the time of the Revolution he had an honorable name and a place of influence in Stonefield. When he was only eighteen years of age he was fighting under General Abercrombie at Ticonderoga. He acquired a knowledge of surveying and was appointed one of a committee to lay out the highways in the sparsely settled town. He married, and his daughter was the first child born in Stonefield. Probably his was the first framed barn built in the town and the first town meeting was held at the house of 'Ensign Reed Redington, Innholder in said town.' He was accounted a man of parts and from time to time his fellow townsmen honored him by making him collector of taxes, clerk of the board of 'Proprietors of Stonefield' and a member of the committee to build the meeting house. His energy, his ability and persever-

ance as well as his gradually increasing property made him a man of mark and influence. His experience at Ticonderoga gave him a taste for the army and in 1775 he was a major in the militia of the province.

With such a record, one is justified in asking why his name does not appear on the memorial tablet on cemetery hill among those who signed 'The Association test'? The answer is that Reed Redington refused to sign the 'test'! He was a tory, the only one in Stonefield. The surrounding towns had many more; in some of them the majority of the citizens were on the side of England as the revolutionary war loomed before them. But Reed Redington was the only one with whom Stonefield had to deal. In 1774 he was suspected of being on the side of 'His Majesty, the King' and any part in town affairs was denied him. When the tea was thrown over in Boston harbor, Redington hurried off to Canada and brought back a large quantity of tea which was probably smuggled. This he sold at a huge profit and by so doing further aroused the suspicion bordering on

hatred of his neighbors. After the report of the battle of Lexington and Concord reached this isolated community, Redington, instead of rising to the defence of his country, left Stonefield 'to see if the report of a battle was correct.'

This so incensed his neighbors that they declared that if they caught him they would hang him. He had several narrow escapes from being caught and these we wanted to hear about and also anything else that we might unearth connected with him. We pretended that it was the boys who were hot on his trail but they were no more keen than Gail and I. We all had heard of 'Redington's Den' and 'Redington's Stairs' and the names with their possible association made delightful cold shivers run down our backs.

We found the general direction in which these wonders lay, but as they were reported to be too distant for us to reach them on foot we decided to borrow the farmer's horse and his two-seated wagon.

The horse was of that good, sensible, de-

pendable but not brilliant variety which, when horses had more influence than they have today, was called the salt of the earth. He could be trusted to do what he wanted to do but not very often to do what you wanted him to do. Gail said that he was like the good people who also were the salt of the earth but who would never take a suggestion and who were constitutionally on 'the other side.' They undoubtedly made the world go round but they made it go round in their own way. So when I touched the nag with the whip to quicken his pace, nay, when I belabored him sore, he did nothing more than to switch his tail which Gail interpreted as a sign that he had received our signal but he wouldn't accept the suggestion that he hurry up a bit.

However by dint of hard work on our part but not on the part of our steed and after more time than we thought absolutely necessary, we arrived at a point where we thought it advisable to inquire our way. Some of the people hadn't ever heard of such places and they didn't believe there were any such. If it had

not been for our confidence they would have passed on their scepticism to us. We were sure that 'Redington's Den' was not a figment of the imagination. We had always been taught to believe that truth is stranger than fiction. Other persons of whom we inquired admitted that they had heard of such places but for the life of 'em they couldn't tell where they were. At one house the woman said that she thought we were going in the right direction and she guessed we were not very far from one of 'em at least. Her husband was pickin' blueberries in a pasture on the right further on and if there was anybody in the town who knew about Reed Redington it was him.

Here was a lead. After drinking at the well in the door-yard and giving the horse a drink at the watering trough to revive his spirits, though we didn't see that he had done anything to warrant his spirits in drooping, we drove on with our eyes riveted on every blueberry patch. At last we came upon the man, as his wife said we would, picking blueberries in a rocky pasture. We hitched the horse and

climbed the stone wall and passed the time of day with the blueberry picker. That is, we did what is called 'passing the time of day' but as I recollect our remarks had nothing to do with clocks, much less with watches, but we mentioned the weather, the prospect of rain, the hay crop, the blueberry yield as compared with previous seasons and other subjects which we thought might open the heart of our new acquaintance. We skirmished about the subject that really interested us until one of the boys unsympathetic with this long approach blurted out, 'Do you know anything about Reed Redington's Den and how we can get to it?' 'Well, I calcerlate I do. If there is anybody in town who knows about him and his story, I guess it's me.' Those were exactly his wife's words. We were in luck. 'Will you tell us something about him, why they never caught him? We want to know awful bad,' came from our other boy. It was no time to correct grammar and I let rhetoric go to the winds. 'But he *was* caught once you know, but they let him go.' 'They did? I thought they

said that if they ever caught him they would hang him?' The curiosity of the boys and for the matter of that of their parents too, was all on fire, as the berrypicker continued, 'I reckon it would 'a' gone hard with him if they had had any proof of treason against him when they arrested him in his own house and took him to the jail fifteen miles away. But at that time they really couldn't put their hand on anything wrong that he had done. They only suspected him. Redington had treated 'em pretty han'som like when they came to his house and tried to argue him into comin' over to the side of the colonies. They didn't make much impression on him, but he gave them a good dinner, turkey and all the fixin's and after dinner, I don't know just how they managed it, they arrested him and took him off to jail. I always thought it was a mighty mean trick after he had treated them so decent, even if he was a skunk of a Tory. Anyway he sort o' got the laugh on them when they left him in the jail and he called after them to tell his wife that he was very comfortable and in the

hands of his friends and that they had better go to his house and have what was left of the turkey for supper. He must 'a been a sarcastic cuss. I rather like him for it.'

The flood gates were evidently open, for he had stopped picking berries and had seated himself on a convenient boulder near by. We indicated our interest by sitting near him without waiting for an invitation, but with eyes and ears and perhaps mouths open. To our great delight he continued, 'I never took much stock in the idea that Reed Redington was such a bad feller. The people were fierce toward him after he was let out of jail. They were awful mean to his family too. I don't excuse him. I am of good revolutionary stock myself, right down to the ground, and a Whig with the best of 'em, but I can't help thinkin' that if they hadn't been so hard on Reed, he might never have gone wrong. They hunted him like a wild beast. W'y, right over there under that pine tree is the cave you were askin' me about, Redington's Den, as they call it. He lived in that cave three months. Suppose we

walk over and see it. It ain't far.' This was just what we were hoping for. We all got up from our respective rocks most willingly, by this time they were beginning to be rather hard, and followed while our friend kept on talking. 'As I was sayin' they hunted him like a wild animal and he took to this cave for safety. His wife had to bring him his food a good part of the time and she had to be mighty careful that nobody saw her. Some of the neighbors knew he was there but they were kind 'er friendly to him and one o' 'em put a jug of rum near the cave and Redington drank the rum and left the empty jug to be filled again. Here we are!' he suddenly exclaimed, 'right up there under that pine tree a little to the left. Can't yer see it? Them fern have kind 'er covered the openin' but if you boys will scramble over the rocks you will find it sure enough.'

Gail and I did not leave the scrambling to the boys but we scrambled too and finally by pushing the brakes and the ferns aside we came upon a veritable cave, small yet large enough

to conceal a man. Spider webs were woven across the entrance. We remembered how Robert Bruce escaped because of spider webs and we were determined that if the ghost of Reed Redington were there, we would not let a spider's web prevent us from seeing it, so we tore the webs away and peered into the darkness. Nothing was to be seen, but our imaginations were good and we conjured up bundles of hay for Reed Redington to sleep on, jugs out of which he had drunk all the rum, and a few other necessities of cave-life in the eighteenth century. We had a thoroughly good time and indulged in all manner of shivers and shakes.

When we had gazed our fill and had scrambled down to the pasture again, insatiable and eager for other adventures we asked our host if he couldn't take us to see 'Redington's Stairs.' He certainly was the most agreeable of guides for he said we could move right over yonder, climb the hill in front of us and there we would be. It seems that one night when Reed Redington had sneaked home from his cave, some officers were on the watch for him and tried to

enter the house and seize him. They did not really know whether he was there or not, but his wife took a 'piggin' of boiling water from the kettle over the fire and threatened to throw the water over any one who set foot into the house. This was an effective weapon and Redington escaped into the woods, but when daylight came, the officers pursued him. They almost surrounded him and drove him to the top of the pinnacle north of his house where they were sure they had him. One side of the pinnacle was a sheer cliff, a hundred or so feet high. To jump down would be certain death. The other side of the pinnacle was so thoroughly guarded that he could not go back the way he came. Capture was certain. So his pursuers thought, but not Reed Redington. He had more at stake than they, he had also more resources. He was perfectly familiar with the spot where he was. They were not. He knew that in the cliff there was a winding chasm which led to the foot of the precipice. They knew nothing about it, and just as his pursuers were about to rush up the hill and

seize him, Reed Redington disappeared as if the earth had closed over him. He let himself down into this chasm, as the officers afterward discovered, and by dint of hard work he made his way crawling from one rock to another until he reached the level ground behind the pinnacle and made his escape unseen by any of the men who were pursuing him, and never was he seen again in this part of the country.

It was a thrilling story and we all stood for several minutes quite awe-struck as we looked down into the chasm. 'Old Reed Redington had a pretty narrer squeak to get away, didn't he, boys?' our friend broke the silence. 'But I fer one am glad he did get away and that they didn't hang him. I suppose he deserved to be hung, but where would we all be if every darned one of us got our deserts? I have always had a soft place in my heart for Reed Redington. He had a lot o' good in him and it warn't the easiest thing in those days to be against the king. It took more grit and faith than old Reed had and I don't know that he was so much to blame for not bein' quite so

plucky as some o' the others. The colonies looked like mighty small potaters compared with England. I'm glad I wasn't livin' in those times. Perhaps I wouldn't ha' had the pluck to be anything better than a Tory myself. Hind-sight is much easier than foresight, that's one thing I do know.'

It was time to start home. We shook hands with our new friend and tried to tell him what a great time we had had. We jumped into the wagon behind the reluctant beast who was reluctant no longer now that he was headed toward home. It makes a great difference which way you are headed and a little sympathy and imagination make it easier to understand the present and the past and to foresee the future.

BARTERING

During the great war some of the natives told me that their community was so self-contained that it could live almost without any contact with the outer world. I dislike immensely that word 'native' as we 'summer people' apply it to those persons who live all the year at the mountains or the shore or the country where we birds of passage alight for only a few weeks once a year. It carries an air of patronage with it if not a slightly contemptuous tone. If the truth were known, I venture to say that 'summer people' on the lips of the natives is no more complimentary. Everything depends upon the human relation underneath, and if that is right, names do not matter. I have heard the permanent residents of this little town speak of themselves as 'natives' with a becoming dignity and pride which made the title distinguished. That is the only way it should ever be used.

As I was saying, they have told me that they were practically as independent so far as the

necessities of life are concerned as were their forebears of the Revolution. A deer or a steer or a pig would furnish their meat. They could raise their own potatoes and other vegetables. Maple syrup and maple sugar would provide their 'long and short' sweetening. Of course fuel could be had for the cutting and likewise fodder for the animals. When it came to tea and coffee, they might have to go without, which would probably be just as well for them, and they could not make their own clothing, but they had enough on hand to last them a long time, even if they looked rather shabby. They would not be able to grind their own flour or meal, because the grist mills have long since fallen into decay and the millstones have been moved from the mill sites to make door-steps and horse blocks. On second thoughts, they admitted, that they would probably have to procure their flour outside and while they were doing that they might just as well get some tea and coffee. The revolutionary times could not be actually reproduced but they could make a fair imitation.

Take the custom of bartering. One neighbor would exchange with another what he had but did not need for something that his neighbor had in abundance. There was little exchange of actual money in the time of the revolution. Little money was in circulation. If one neighbor had more eggs than he wanted and another had more butter, they managed an exchange without the passing of a single cent. So it was with many of the necessities of life. What one did not have another supplied for a fair return in something that he himself lacked. That sort of neighborliness could go on indefinitely. In fact it continues to the present day. A lone man may bring the materials for cooking to a housewife and she will bake his bread or roast his meat, and in return he will milk her cow or mow her grass, or perhaps he will supply her with a stated number of eggs. Speaking of eggs, they are one of the luxuries. One woman was once asked what she did with her eggs and she replied that she took them to a store in a distant village and there exchanged them for groceries. 'How many hens do you

keep?' she was asked, rather impertinently I think. 'One,' she replied proudly and in such a way as to end the conversation. That one hen must have been a rival to 'Jewel,' the prize layer of which Mark Sullivan writes.

Gail tells of a bartering expedition that she went on a few years ago. That is not her name, she was christened Abigail after her two grandmothers, and her friends call her Abby. But I prefer Gail, for she is the breeziest person I know and her smile and laughter and high spirits blow all the mists of depression and apprehension away. She makes life worth living.

She tells how she started off in a buggy with the farmer's wife to a lonely house miles from any other habitation. Under the seat of the buggy was a little pig in a gunny sack. His squealing kept time with the chug, chug of the heavy footed nag as they made their laborious way to this outlying farm. Miles and miles it was from the village. The mail man never came that way, and hardly any other traveller. If any neighbor knew that he should take that road, he brought whatever mail there might

be in the village post office for the family. In winter they went for days and weeks without a paper or a letter or the sound of a human voice other than their own. The road was little travelled, because all the neighboring farms had been abandoned. It was not ploughed out in winter and even in summer it was none too good. But it was passable and finally the farm house was reached, the neatest place imaginable, as Gail describes it. The floors freshly painted and spotless as if prepared for inspection. Handsome braided rugs of various sizes were lying here and there in the different rooms. White curtains hung at the windows of the living room, a glimpse into the chambers showed that the beds were immaculate, and the kitchen stove looked as if it had just come from the store and had never been used, but its appearance belied the truth, for cookies and berry muffins and cakes were quickly brought out for the delectation of the callers.

The conversation was general, about the neighbors, about the crops, the last meeting of the Ladies' Aid, the latest news from a friend

who had gone to China, until finally, as if an after-thought and not the real object of the call the farmer's wife said, 'I've brought you the pig you wanted, Lizzie.' 'Hev' yer? Now that's real good of you, Mirandy. Where is it?' This question seemed hardly necessary as the little porker evidently thought he was making his whereabouts known by his squeals from under the buggy seat. Etiquette, however, apparently required that no inquiries should be made about the pig until his arrival had been duly announced. They took the sack from the buggy and 'Lizzie' looked in. When she saw the little creature struggling as if for dear life, she said with moderate enthusiasm, 'That's a good pi-i-i-g, Mirandy.' Then, as if she thought it merited higher praise, in her characteristic drawl she added, 'He's a re-e-al good pi-i-i-g! What do yer want fer that pi-i-i-g, Mirandy?' No answer was vouchsafed and the conversation took other turns until the question was repeated. Somewhat tentatively, almost apologetically, the farmer's wife who brought the pig suggested that three dollars,

about three dollars the pig was worth, was that too much? 'No, that's all ri-i-ight, that's re-e-eal cheap,' was the reply, 'it's a good p-i-i-ig, it's a re-e-eal good p-i-ig.' Thereupon the pig was transferred to its new domicile and the visitors mounted the buggy to go home. No money had as yet degraded the transaction. They all said good-bye and the callers were urged to come again, when the horse was suddenly halted and the farmer's wife called out, 'I don't suppose you have any eggs, Lizzie?' New Englanders are always cautious. It is so much better to put the question in the negative form, so that if it is answered in the negative, one will appear to have been prepared for the refusal. Disappointment will not be so apparent. But on this particular occasion there was no disappointment for the answer came back, 'Aigs, Mirandy, aigs? Why I've got the cellar full of 'em. How many would yer like?' The number was agreed upon, the eggs were brought and as part compensation for the pig, were appropriately put under the seat where the pig had been. The callers

again started on their way, but again the horse was halted and the call came from the buggy, 'I don't suppose you've got any butter, Lizzie.' The barrier against possible disappointment was as strong as ever, but all unnecessary for the answer came back as before, 'Bu-u-utte-er, Mirandy, bu-u-ut-t-e-er? Why, I've got loads of bu-u-tte-er in the cellar. I churned only yesterday. You ken hev as much as yer want. How much *do* yer want, Mirandy?' The amount was stated and the butter was brought forth and put under the seat beside the eggs. Together they apparently were the equivalent both in space and money for the pig, for no financial consideration entered into the transaction.

But the end was not yet. Just as Mirandy and Gail were finally ready to start, a horse whinnied in the near-by barn. Gail metaphorically pricked up her ears, and involuntarily exclaimed, 'Do these people own a horse?' The horse himself answered the question by poking his head out of the barn door. 'Why, in common sense then,' continued Gail, 'do they

always walk to the village and why, most of the time, do they not go at all? If they have a horse, why do they not drive, and get their mail regularly and see their neighbors and keep in touch with what is going on in the village and in the world in general?' 'Better ask them,' was Mirandy's brief but pertinent reply. Thereupon Gail, nothing loth, jumped out of the buggy and ran to the barn door where she began patting the horse. 'This is a fine horse,' she called across the door yard to Lizzie who had just gone into the house. 'O, not so awful fine!' Lizzie called back as she emerged once more from the doorway, 'he ain't good for much.' 'I suppose you often drive to the village with him and get your mail,' continued Gail. 'Land sakes, no, he'd drop in his tracks, if we druv him as far as that.' 'What do you use him for then, if you never drive him?' 'He's a great help in gettin' the hay in.' 'O, you sell the hay. That must bring in quite an income.' 'Indeed, we don't sell a spear of it. We need every bit of it ourselves to feed to the horse.' 'But,' insisted Gail, 'if the horse is

no good but to make the hay and the hay is no good but to feed the horse, I should think it would be much simpler and easier all round ——.' Gail, however, did not have the chance to say what she thought would be simpler and easier all round because at that moment she was interrupted by the farmer's wife declaring that they mustn't stand round gossipin' any more or they would never get home before dark. So what Gail thought would be 'simpler and easier all round' was never divulged. Perhaps it was better so. Somebody's feelings might have been hurt and where previously all was serene, that would have been a pity.

IN SEARCH OF A DOUGH BOX

Our hearts were set on having a dough box. I do not know just why, because we had never seen a dough box and would not recognize one even if we saw it. Nevertheless there were moments when a dough box seemed to us to be the most desirable possession in the world, on the principle that the unknown and the unattained always have an inexplicable attraction for mortals like ourselves. We knew perfectly well that if we acquired a dough box we would not know what to do with it or where to put it. But this did not dampen in the least the ardor of our desire. From its name we inferred that it was a box to keep dough in, but we never had any dough to keep in anything. From our very limited experience with other peoples' dough, we thought dough was kept in a big tin pan, something like a dish pan with a cover with holes in it. But if we were right in our surmise as to the use of a dough box we were yet mystified as to why anybody would want to keep dough. Dough, if it were

good dough, should be cooked, at least that was our opinion. However, we had heard the fame of a dough box with our ears and we simply wanted one. It was an innocent wish on our part and quite without guile, for though we had consulted the whole countryside we had never found any one who had personally ever owned, seen or had any dealings whatsoever with this particular article of household furniture. But was it a piece of furniture? Shouldn't it more properly be called a utensil? We frankly did not know, but we agreed that if once the coveted article should actually be ours, even if we never put so much as an ounce of dough in it, we could find some use for it, or at least rest content if it should become only an article of 'bigotry and virtu.' A doughless dough box might be as much of an object of beauty as a spinning wheel that never spinned. Who could tell? Not we. So we were always in search of a dough box, but up to the time of which I write, we had not so much as ever heard of where one might be found nor had we seen one advertised for sale.

We decided that if haply and happily we should ever acquire one and did not want it for dough, if it were large enough and if it had a cover and lock and key, we might use it for a hope chest, but for hope of what we were not quite clear. If it should prove too small for a hope chest, we might keep our fine linen in it in case we should ever have any such, or with or without a cover and lock we might keep fire wood in it in the living room or old newspapers or string or bundle-carriers or tacks or hooks or nails or assorted bottles or wrapping paper or pieces of leather excellent for hinges, or pieces of wire-netting equally excellent for mending rusted window-screens, or other rubbish that we never know what to do with but which we want the moment after we have thrown any of it away. Or we could keep it on the piazza and when callers, attracted by its charming outlines, asked, 'What is that beautiful box over there,' we should be able to reply nonchalantly, 'That? O, that is just a common ordinary dough box,' and leave them guessing just as we have been guessing for years.

At last, however, opportunity loomed in the distance. A poet tells us that opportunity knocks only once at our door and if we do not open to it, it never knocks again, while another poet says that opportunity after opportunity comes knocking all through life. Whichever poet is right, we decided that though the present knock was a faint one we would not wait for a louder one. This particular knock came by way of a large hand-bill announcing an auction miles away from the Hill Mowing. A beguiling array of articles was offered for sale on a particular day at 12.30 P.M. standard time. We had read such hand-bills before. We were convinced that they were but a delusion and a snare with their account of farm tools, old bureaus, and sleigh beds. Whoever would want to sleep in a bed that had any suggestion of a sleigh about it, particularly in this cold climate? I shudder at the thought of it and am about to throw the catalogue in the fire when Gail with mild interest asks to see the paper and reads aloud in an indifferent tone, 'Some good china, a few hooked rugs, cover-

let and sheets, (who would want to buy coverlets and sheets at an auction, ugh!) carpets, stoves, an iron winder, (what under the sun do you suppose that is?) lamps, lanthorns, ladders and linen, (the person who made out this list liked alliteration,) a spool-bed, mahogany chairs, glass, some of it particularly good.' Gail continued to read on in listless fashion until she fairly shouted with excitement and exclaimed, 'And what do you think, there is an actual dough box going to be sold! They say it's in perfect condition. Here is our opportunity. Now or never. We must go to that auction and bid in that dough box no matter if we have to mortgage the house to do it.' Then the rest of the family all chimed in and sang, I the loudest of the lot, 'So say we all of us, so say we all of us, so say we all!' I proposed three cheers for the dough box and they were given with a tiger, 'auction!' from the boys.

This was all very well, but the practical difficulty arose of how we were to reach the distant hamlet, the home of the dough box which we craved. We had neither horse nor cart, auto-

mobile nor Ford and the distance was too far to walk, besides we must have something to bring the dough box back in. A happy thought struck me. I would commandeer a friend and his car, a hundred miles or so away who, if he knew of such things as dough boxes, would be as interested in them as we were, and would take us all to the auction and bring us back with our treasure trove.

My plan worked to perfection. Our friend answered our summons and arrived the day before the auction so that we could discuss our intentions leisurely during the evening. When the morning of the great day dawned, it dawned none too promisingly but weather or anything else could not detain us. So after a snack we started gaily forth in a real automobile that the proudest dough box would not be ashamed to ride in. I do not know exactly why we had a snack instead of lunch or luncheon. I think it was because if you are going on a dignified errand you have luncheon, or on a semi-serious excursion you have lunch, but if you sally forth gaily, blithely, merrily in search

of a dough box, it is evident that the only appropriate thing to have is a snack. So a snack, it was, that we had.

We reached the place of the auction before the crowd arrived and had ample time to look about and spot the dough box so that we would recognize it when it was put up for sale. The sun was beginning to struggle through the clouds by this time so with the confidence born of hope the auctioneer had had bed-steads, bureaus, chairs and chest of drawers as well as stoves placed on the lawn for easier inspection while the choicer and more perishable articles were under cover in the barn or the shed or the house itself. We were free to wander where we liked. 'Where do you suppose the dough box is?' I asked in a whisper. 'Sh!' was the reply from Gail, 'we don't want to appear too interested because some one might hear us and be just mean enough to bid against us.' 'Where would it be most likely to live?' I ventured in another stage whisper, 'in the shed?' We looked in the shed but found nothing but wash-tubs, scrubbing board and clothes

wringer, nothing that to our uninstructed imagination looked anything like a dough box. 'Suppose we look in the barn,' I suggested *sotto voce*, to which Gail replied with as much scorn as she could put into her subdued tones that the barn was the last place in which to keep a dough box. 'You never can tell,' I replied in the manner of George Bernard Shaw, and insisted that we investigate the barn. There we found an excellent assortment of farm tools including a buck-saw with a handle like box-wood which I thought would make an excellent companion for the dough box and decided then and there that when the time came I would bid on it, but of the object of our search, not a sign. I was beginning to be a little discouraged but Gail cheered me up by saying that we had not looked in the kitchen or dining room yet and in as much as we really did not know what a dough box looked like, we might find it in the parlor. To those rooms respectively we went but found nothing that remotely resembled what we pictured a dough box to be. It was evident that we had inadvertently

passed it by without recognizing it. There was nothing left for us to do but to ask some questions, so in as bland a manner as possible and with my most courteous smile I approached a little old lady who looked as though, if she knew anything, she would know what a dough box was, having probably lived in the companionship of one all her life. I addressed her with the remark that I thought the sun would come out soon, to which she replied that she reckoned it would. Encouraged by this show of affability I went on to say that there seemed to be rather a fine lot of articles to be sold this afternoon and that in the catalogue I had noticed that a dough box was to be auctioned off. I ventured to say that I had always been interested in dough boxes but I had never seen one, and could she, by any chance, tell me what one looked like. But alas and alack, she had not even heard of one, but she reckoned again that it must be a box to keep dough in. I returned to Gail in despair and said, 'There is nothing for us to do but to wait until the auction begins and when the auctioneer comes

to the dough box he will hold it in his hands or if it is too big he will point to it and call it by name, describe it, tell all about it, what it has been used for and what use it is at the present time, and then we can bid. We had better get as close as possible to him so we can see and hear when he puts the dough box up.'

By this time the number of people had increased so that a fair sized crowd was present. Automobiles lined either side of the highway that went by the pleasant farm-house. The sun shining brightly made shadows through the maple trees on the lawn. The color of the women's dresses gave a gala touch to the scene and through the wide open doors of the barn, filled with sweet-smelling hay, could be seen the green meadow and the brook beyond. It was a really beautiful scene. It might almost have been a garden party, for the golden glow was blossoming in the dooryard and white flox was waving in the gentle breeze as it grew on the other side of the stone wall. The people from the countryside met friends and 'visited' together, neighbors came from next door and

across the way. There was a sprinkling of 'city folks' and a dealer or two who hoped to pick up bargains to be sold later at a tremendous profit. All was orderly, seemly and good-natured. A touch of sadness in the hearts of some was inevitable as they realized that the life, as they knew it, of the pleasant house was done, but there was no sacrifice of possessions dear to any one now living, so when the good-natured auctioneer cracked his jokes, every one was ready to smile. 'We will begin with the jewelry,' he said as he took his stand on a box in the barn door-way and began to offer the farm implements to the highest bidder. 'What am I bid for this collection of pitchforks and two rakes?' Not a voice was raised. Every one apparently had all the pitchforks and rakes he needed. 'I'll add this fine hoe to the bunch, as fine a hoe as ever was made. What am I bid for the lot?' Not a sound. The crowd was not interested or it had not warmed up. 'You remind me of my wife's father,' the auctioneer shouted, 'he had spells when he wouldn't speak.' A laugh went

around, the 'spell' was broken. Somebody bid twenty-five cents. 'Sold.' The buck-saw together with various other saws was offered next, my prospective buck-saw. I bid. A man bid against me. I bid again. My opponent went higher. He wanted the saw more than I did. I subsided and bided the time when the dough box would be put on the block. It was not brought out of the barn, of that I was sure, no mention was made of it. We moved to the kitchen door. Here a motley collection of things were sold to avid buyers, a pair of vases with the handle of one of them gone, described by the auctioneer as 'slightly dehorned' was knocked down to some one for fifty cents. A flip glass which the auctioneer said 'might be a Stiegel and again it mightn't' went to a dealer for fourteen dollars. Chairs, tables and table linen, blankets and sheets all went at fairly good prices but no dough box! Finally a nondescript article was put into the auctioneer's hands. 'You buy it for what you think it is. I might almost say "name it and you can have it."' I looked at Gail and she looked at me.

Our eyes questioned each other. 'Could that be the dough box?' It wasn't a box, that was certain, yet it would hold dough, that also was certain. I telegraphed to Gail 'Shall I bid on it?' She telephoned back 'No!' While the bidding was getting lively, I made my way to where Gail was standing and said 'Perhaps it is the dough box after all, we really never saw one, you know, hadn't I better bid on it?' 'No!' answered Gail almost in tears, 'if it were the only dough box in existence I don't want it, I wouldn't give it house-room.'

The auction was over. We returned to the automobile empty handed. We did not have the dough box or even the buck-saw. We still did not know what a dough box is. I was inclined to be somewhat crestfallen but Gail helped out the situation by remarking, 'Well, we will not have to mortgage the farm, anyway.'

BOOKS

If a man is known by the company he keeps, is it equally true that a family is known by the character of the books on the library shelves? Have we not heard of persons who have suddenly become rich and in their desire to possess a library have given *carte blanche* to a bookseller to fill the cases with books which the new owner will never open? We may have actually known some one who has a passion for beautiful bindings, who has indulged his passion so that his library is a real work of art, something like an art gallery, and the books themselves may be extra-illustrated with rare drawings, steel engravings and old wood-cuts. Such a library may be an indulgence to the eye, but it is quite possible for the proud owner to be entirely ignorant of what is contained between any two hand-wrought covers of his books. To have your books any real index of your character or of your liking, you must read, mark, learn and inwardly digest. Therefore I hope that no one will judge us at the Hill Mowing

by our books. They are a miscellaneous lot. Some of them we read and reread and live by. Some of them are duplicates, some of them are remnants of other family libraries from which any book that anybody else wanted has been culled, some of them have been given us by devoted friends who were certain they knew better than we what we would like or what we ought to read. A book may be the most delightful of gifts, but it may be also the most inept. We have some of each kind at the Hill Mowing. We also have books that we have never had time to read in the long winter evenings. We have brought them hither with the fond thought that we shall read them in the long summer days, but, alas, we have found 'the long summer days' as much of a delusion so far as time to read is concerned as are 'the long winter evenings.' There are no long winter evenings any more. Just as you are seated by the open fire with a delectable book in your hand, the telephone rings. You jump up as if there were great haste, but now that 'central' has been eliminated, I do not see why there is

any haste to answer a purely mechanical contrivance. Let it go on ringing, I say, and do not rush to answer the telephone as if the house were on fire or as if 'central' were waiting to say to you, 'Wrong number, please excuse it.' No one heeds what I say, and if the truth must be told, I do not heed it myself but by force of habit rush with an impetuosity which induces heart disease.

Gail and I do not meet our telephonic interruptions with a system, as we should. We have not educated the maid, when there is a maid, to answer the telephone quietly, deliberately and without irritation, and to say, as the case may be, 'the family is at dinner,' or 'the family has callers,' or 'the family is reading to itself' or 'the family is reading aloud, and if you will give me your number I will call them when they are at leisure,' or, if they are at leisure, 'I will call them' and come just as quietly and deliberately and equally destitute of irritation and say, 'You are wanted at the telephone, sir, or madam,' as circumstances require. It is a peaceful and alluring picture I

draw but not true to facts in most homes. In our home we all are of such a philanthropic nature that when the telephone rings, maid or no maid, we all spring from our seats and exclaim, 'I will answer it,' and some one else replies, 'I may as well answer it, I am sure it is for me,' and then I yield and remark, 'We had better let mother answer it, it is generally for her,' and she does answer it and it is Bridget who is wanted. However the interruption has destroyed all continuity of thought and the long winter evening, what remains of it, is devoted to waiting for the telephone to ring again.

Is it any wonder, when the long winter evenings get shorter of their own accord, that those fortunate persons who have Hill Mowings to flee to where there are no telephones lose little time in going thither? 'Summer time,' as they call 'daylight saving' in England, and a far more graceful expression it is, makes the long summer days longer than they have ever been, but even so, time for reading has deliberately to be made. There is so much to be done. The trees are forever

growing up as if their one purpose was to cut off our view or to hide the sunsets, and to prevent this, the trees themselves must be cut off. There was a time when we could hardly bear to have a blade of grass much less a shrub molested, but nature is so rampant that it is necessary for us constantly to assert ourselves against her. Then when the trees are cut down, they must be sawn up into firewood for next season. We have a long two-handled saw and it requires all the family to wield it. One person literally hangs on to one end while a huskier individual at the other tries his best to get the saw away from him and in the attempt the log somehow is sawn in two. Often a third member of the family is besought to sit astride of the log to keep it in place and to prevent the saw from buckling. This does not sound as if it were a very scientific process and I do not believe it is, but it serves to enlist from time to time all the prowess of the various members of the family, to provide logs for the fireplaces and wood for the kitchen stove and, incidentally, to improve health and appetites.

Other things must be done that impinge upon our reading time. The gasoline engine which pumps a part of our water supply must be cared for constantly and tenderly. It is as temperamental as a Ford. Food must be acquired in some way, and any way necessitates time, thought and ingenuity. We are far more than 'a mile from a lemon.' After June there are berries of various sorts to be picked which add materially to the food supply, and walks innumerable are calling to us far and near. A canoe on Long Pond awaits our paddles where we can glide seven miles in a straight line or meander among islets with inviting mossy shores. The type-writer urges composition upon us if we are inclined to be literary and the mail box must frequently be visited.

Nevertheless we do find our opportunity to read, if not all through the long summer days, at least through a part of the long summer afternoons. It may be on the piazza whence, if we lift our eyes from our book, there is an ever changing glory of sun and shade, of blue sky and snow white cloud on the pond that lies at

our feet and on the mountain in the far distance. Or we may take our book to the pine grove which has been cleared for a birthday present and is known as September 2nd, the day it celebrates. If it be one of those delightful rainy days when the house seems to put its arms like a mother about us, we have a fire in the living room and take a book from the round table.

Any one can tell very nearly what year it is by the books on the round table. They are not books that live here, but books that come and go with us.

The books that remain at the Hill Mowing from year to year, the permanent residents so to speak, with the additions made to them from time to time, are housed on shelves that line three sides of one end of the living room. The shelves are put in between the studding, for the house is not plastered, and are of simple, roughly finished pine. Gail had definite ideas in regard to the shelves, how they should be placed and how they should look. She wanted each shelf fitted to the space between

the studding, although all the spaces were not of equal width. Above all she wanted the ends of the shelves rounded. When the young carpenter came to do the work he did not see how the rounding could be done. After debating and considering the whole matter for some time, he was left to his own devices and he soon called out with delight that he had found a way. He had taken his dinner pail and with this as a pattern, he had drawn a curve on each shelf which produced the exact effect Gail wanted. We were certain that this ingenuity and resourcefulness would stand him in good stead and we knew that it did when recently we danced at his wedding and learned that he is now an instructor in mechanical arts in the High School in one of the cities in New England.

The books on these shelves, as I have hinted, are truly a heterogeneous lot. Among them the seventeen volumes of the American Cyclopedia printed in 1873, because of their number and general aggressiveness are the most conspicuous. They are over fifty years old and can

scarcely be said to be up to date, but the illustrations are excellent for children to look at on rainy days, and the information the books distil about events of fifty or more years ago is not without value. For instance I found in the volume marked 'Car–Cod' an account of the Chicago fire in 1871, with a map of the burnt district and the interesting detail that the fire was started by the overturning of a kerosene lamp. I was disappointed that the writer of the article did not mention Mrs. O'Grady's cow that kicked over the lamp, but was it Mrs. O'Reilly's cow? In the interests of accuracy, perhaps the reticence of the Cyclopedia is the more to be commended.

Vying for the place of honor are the ten volumes of 'The Literature of all Nations,' edition de luxe, which I bought in my callow days on the subscription plan. I did not succeed in paying for the books until after I was married and then I was so convinced of their worthlessness that I came near having a law suit because I did not keep up my payments regularly. They are good-looking books and if not exam-

ined too carefully give a certain air of distinction to the room and brighten the corner where they are. We have Carlyle's 'French Revolution' and Boswell's 'Life of Johnson.' Every word of each Gail has read by assiduous application, summer after summer. I accuse her of sliding back since she began with Gibbon because she has been in his company many seasons and has got no farther than the third volume of his 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.'

Only yesterday I took down the little volume containing Tolstoi's story 'Where Love is, there God is also.' It had great vogue twenty or thirty years ago. It was the kind of book that Sunday School teachers gave at Christmas to their pupils and vice versa. I was surprised to find it so out-dated and so false and sentimental. On the other hand we have 'The Heart of Oak' books, a collection of prose and poetry made by Charles Eliot Norton. It is one of the finest collections for young people and for their elders that we know. We hardly hear it mentioned today, but it is a real addi-

tion to any library. Of course we have Tennyson and Browning and Stevenson. Of these three, just at present Stevenson seems to be the only one holding the public regard, but I confess to liking Tennyson's music and Browning's optimism. One summer when Gail was recovering from an illness and had to spend most of her days in a steamer chair, we read aloud 'the Ring and the Book' and Gail explained it to me. She has always been a far better Browning student than I.

We have Dante and the 'Imitation of Christ' as well as Chesterton's 'Life of Saint Francis,' but I shall have to refresh my memory to tell of all the other books. I am constantly forgetting what we have here, and I confuse this library with our more sophisticated one. Just now, in true New England fashion to forestall disappointment, I called down stairs, 'I do not suppose we have a copy of "Pilgrim's Progress" up here, have we?' and Gail immediately brought me the copy that she had bought long ago with the proceeds of some of her translations from the French.

That reminds me that we have some French and Italian literature, but I do not make rapid progress in it. Gail far outdistances me there as she does in most other things. The one subject in which I am certain I am her superior is that of mushrooms. Here my knowledge exceeds hers. But it is not much to my credit. If it is true that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach, and if he knows what mushrooms are good to eat and what are not, why should his wife have any ambition even to equal, much less surpass his knowledge?

Speaking of mushrooms, my faltering memory recalls that we have books about trees and wild flowers and birds. Early today we saw a large and brilliantly crested woodpecker on the trunk of the maple just outside the living room window. We 'looked him up,' and found he was a pileated woodpecker, but he refused to stay with us, although we were able to address him by his rightful name.

Among our dearest possessions is a set of little volumes of Shakespeare, bound in Russia leather and contained in a Russia leather case.

To be sure, the cover of the box, on which was printed in gold letters the contents of each volume, has been broken off and in some amazing way has disappeared. However, the little volumes themselves are intact and each is a veritable gem. The fragrance is as inviting as on the day they first were bought and I do not like to tell how long ago that was. It was in my youth, if not in my childhood. My father took me with him into Little and Brown's, then on Washington Street in Boston, to see Mr. John Bartlett, of Bartlett's 'Familiar Quotations,' who was a friend of my father's. My eye lighted upon this beautiful edition of Shakespeare and I coveted it as I think I never coveted an inanimate object before or since. I felt of it and I smelt of it. I got my father to feel it and smell of it. I opened and closed the box, I took out one of the volumes and showed him the clear and perfect type. We never have been people of wealth, quite the opposite, but I remember that I felt as if I were the richest boy in the world when my father turned to me and said, 'My son, I am willing to buy it for

you, if you will promise to take good care of it.' You may be sure I promised and I think I have fairly kept my word, in spite of the broken and lost cover. I saw him pay twenty-five dollars for the books, to me a prodigious sum, though to-day the like could not be had for close to a hundred dollars. I clasped the books to my heart and went out into the street with a face that must have beamed with joy and with a presence redolent of Russia leather.

There has been a discussion recently whether or not smells can be remembered. I can not describe many smells, except that one smell reminds me of another, but when I think of some of the odors that have made the most impression on me, I am sure that my thought of them is akin to remembrance. I can to this day recall the odor of my grandmother's pantry, although I have not smelt it since I was ten years old and the house long years ago was burnt to the ground. But if I ever encounter such a delectable odor as proceeded from the currants, the ginger, the cinnamon, the baked apples, the pies and the cakes which

that pantry contained, I shall greet it as an old friend and shall, metaphorically speaking of course, fall on its neck and embrace it.

The same is true about my recollection of the fragrance of Russia leather. If I catch a whiff of it from a pocket-book or a case for glasses in the hands of a chance passer-by I think of Shakespeare and the 'Merchant of Venice' and 'Macbeth' and 'Othello' and 'As You Like It,' and 'Much Ado about Nothing,' and 'Twelfth Night' as they first were revealed to me in these little Russia leather-bound volumes of long ago.

Scattered on the shelves are Trollope's novels, one of which, at least, we read every year and renew our friendship with his characters, who are real people to us. Novels by Edith Wharton, William D. Howells, 'Ague-cheek,' James Lane Allen, Anna Fuller, Zangwill, George Eliot, a motley array, but the authors touch elbows in friendly fashion and seem not at all indisposed toward such intimacy on our shelves.

We have a huge, ancient copy of Worcester's

dictionary in which we look in vain for any word of recent coinage, and we have several editions and translations of the Bible. This is the oldest of our books and yet we find it the newest. Noyes's translation of the New Testament, dear to the heart of our grandmother, stands side by side with the King James version. Every Sunday after church, Gail looks up the text of the sermon just as did her grandmother before her, and reads over the passage that the minister read for the scripture lesson. Last night she turned to the concluding words of the eighth chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans, 'For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

PICNICS

MANY, many years ago, as the fairy tales of our youth began, there was a variety show called 'Muldoon's Picnic.' It was before the days of vaudeville and other French contraptions and people went to the varieties as people now go to the movies, only there were not so many people then, nor did the varieties equal in number the present movies. However a variety show was perfectly respectable and was like to be the stepping stone to better things for an actor or actress of talent.

'Muldoon's Picnic' was a particularly good entertainment as I remember it. It was before the Jew had replaced the Irishman on the stage as the creator of mirth. Muldoon himself was played by an actor by the name of Pat Rooney. If he has any descendants they may well be proud of their ancestry because the original Pat Rooney was a genius in his line. As Muldoon he was the instigator of this particular picnic. He gathered all his neighbors and friends on one glad day and repaired to the

picnic grounds. All went merrily until the inherent love of a fight in the Irish broke loose and with or without a pretext the neighbors and friends all fell to using their fists. Muldoon was in the midst of the fray, battered now by one side and now by the other, and ever and anon he would break forth in a tone that should have melted the most obdurate, 'a picnic's a picnic but this ain't no picnic.'

There are picnics and picnics but let me assure you that the picnics that start from the Hill Mowing as a base are real picnics.

We have two kinds, clean picnics and dirty picnics. Do not for a moment assume that the latter is a term of reproach. Far from it. It only serves to describe the condition of the picnickers after they have had a delectable repast. To be more explicit, a clean picnic is where sandwiches and pickles and cookies furnish forth the larger part of the banquet. From such a feast even the most careless can emerge in fairly immaculate condition. But from a dirty picnic, the condition is far different. On a dirty picnic we build fires and get

covered with ashes, we fry bacon and acquire many spots of grease, we cook eggs and the yolks do not always maintain their integrity, try as we may, butter will get on our fingers and the frosting from the cake emulates the butter. Nevertheless it is the dirty picnic that comes nearest to our hearts, especially to the hearts of the boys, as you shall hear.

It is probably one of those clear, cool matchless days when, so far can we see, we think the whole world must be visible. The breakfast dishes are all washed and piled neatly on the kitchen shelves. The kitchen itself is immaculate and the sheets and the pillow cases and articles of wearing apparel are either spread over the bushes to dry or are waving merrily on the line stretched between the old apple and the maple. The apple tree is a beauty to look upon but it is more useful as a clothes-pole than for the apples it bears.

Gail looks upon the work of her hands, in doors and out, and let me modestly say upon the work of the hands of her husband and sons also, and she says that she knows just how the

Lord felt when he had completed the task of making the world and saw that it was good.

If this does not suggest a holiday mood, I do not know what does, so I call out, 'What do you say, boys, to having a picnic? We can do all the work and let mother rest. We'll go down to the farm and have dinner so nothing will have to be done but to prepare for it. Shall it be a clean picnic or a dirty picnic? What do you say?' The boys shout, 'Dirty, dirty, dirty.' 'So be it,' say I and they scream and jump up and down with delight. Then I continue, 'Go down to the farm and ask if we can have dinner there, and then go to the Boltons who live by Eagle Pond and ask them if they will go with us. And boys, you might hint to Mrs. Bolton that if there is time and if she would like to, we think it would be very kind of her if she would make one of her perfectly delicious orange layer-cakes with deep orange frosting for the picnic. Be sure to call it perfectly delicious, for it is and I think that that description may be a little more fetching, enough to fetch the cake. And one

thing more, don't forget to speak of the orange filling as *deep*, though perhaps that is not necessary. Come to think of it, Mrs. Bolton's frostings are always thick, she never is stingy about anything. And boys, you might hint rather broadly about the cake and on the whole I think it may be better not to beat about the bush but to ask her outright. I think that frankness is always better in the long run, like a certain make of automobile tires, and I am certain it is where orange layer-cake is concerned, the kind Mrs. Bolton makes, I mean.'

I find that I have been talking to myself, how long I do not know, for the boys have disappeared down the hill and are off on their errands. If they have heard nothing else, I do hope they have heard and will heed what I said about the orange layer-cake, because there is nothing like it for picnics. Gail is a perfect cook where berry muffins are concerned, but she balks at layer-cake.

The boys return in the course of time. It is surprising how long it takes to go to Eagle

Pond and back and yet it is really only a short way. I wonder if Mrs. Bolton has beguiled them with a cookie, or several cookies. When the boys finally appear, their eyes are as big as saucers and in one breath and in concert they communicate the welcome news that 'Mr. and Mrs. Bolton are awfully glad to come on the picnic, and Mrs. Bolton says there is plenty of time to make the orange layer-cake, and what else do we want, just let her know when we come down to dinner, yes, we can have dinner at the farm, and Mrs. Bolton wants to know if you would like her to make some venison sandwiches, she has just baked and the venison she put up last winter when Mr. Bolton shot the deer and sent us a piece of venison to roast, don't you remember and we asked the Fergusons to come to dinner and they said they had never tasted such good venison before? And shall she bring eggs and bacon, she is afraid she has not enough bacon, but she thinks she can get some more, if you want her to.'

I stop the flood by asking if Mrs. Bolton

wants not only to feed us but also the whole world. 'We'll bring the eggs and bacon and the chocolate and the bread for toast and if mother wants to make some fudge we will not object, will we boys?' But fudge on top of orange layer-cake would be like piling Pelion on Ossa, wouldn't it?' I wonder if the boys know what either Pelion or Ossa is and why one should not be piled upon the other, any more than why fudge should not be piled on orange layer-cake. Perhaps this is a good time to give them a little classical instruction. What is learned casually and in the line of our every day life is apt to be the better remembered. But the boys apparently are willing to remain all their lives ignorant of both Pelion and Ossa for they have turned their attention to collecting all the paraphernalia necessary for this picnic of all picnics. The water bottles must be prepared, for there is no water on the pinnacle and we are always thirsty after orange layer-cake. Wood can be gathered for the fires when we reach the pinnacle itself, but we want the toaster for the bread, the rack to

hold the coffee pot and the chocolate pot, and we shall need the spider in which we can cook the bacon and fry the eggs. We must be sure that there are plates and knives and forks and spoons enough in the picnic basket, which is supposed always to be ready for any picnic but sometimes isn't, and above all we must not forget the paper and the matches to light the fire. We are always forgetting them and having to go back.

This collecting Gail leaves to her men folks. Her opportunity will come when she makes the coffee and toasts the bread and fries the eggs. In a certain sense her opportunity has already come when after dinner at the farm, she asks if we have collected everything. She enumerates each item and we check it, but we haven't the spider. 'Where is it?' 'It is where it always is, with the other picnic things.' 'But I can't find it!' 'It is right there.' 'No it isn't, we must have left it on the pinnacle when we had our last picnic there.' 'No, we didn't, it is right where it belongs, I saw it this morning. I never knew a man who could find any-

thing. If it were a bear it would bite you. If you can't see it, shut your eyes and put out your hand and you will find it.' And wonderful to relate, I do exactly that and I find the spider. I always do what Gail tells me to do, except the times when I do not. I maintain, however, that if men can not find things, their inability in that direction is nothing compared with the ability of women to hide things where they can not be found, at least where they can not be found by men.

This little *contretemps* passes, though for a second I am reminded of the picnic given by Muldoon which ended so disastrously, and we are diverted by the call, 'coo-whee' of Mr. and Mrs. Bolton who appear climbing up the hill. By the care with which Mr. Bolton carries a box, a large box, resting on his open hand, we feel that our hopes and expectations are fulfilled.

It is a further climb to the place near where we saw the doe and the fawns. Each of us carries something and so we reach the summit without any one being tired. Slabs of granite almost as level and smooth as a floor make the

summit. In a sheltered nook a little to the right, the boys have built two stone fireplaces and they have gathered enough dead wood to make two good fires. Over one the coffee is made and over the other the bacon and eggs are fried. The bread is toasted on long forks held close to the blazing wood and when all is ready, toast is put upon a plate for each one and on the toast a fried egg is deftly tossed together with a piece or two of bacon. Never does food taste better and never are we more grateful to the hen and to the man who invented bacon. The coffee and chocolate are boiled to a turn, but I believe boiled things are never turned, well, the coffee and chocolate have done to them what should be done, and are unequalled. Then more eggs and more toast and more bacon, and more coffee, for under such surroundings one can drink with impunity all the coffee he wants without the prospect of lying awake all night. Nevertheless we do not risk coffee on the boys, they regale themselves on chocolate and are quite content. Then the crown of all the feast, the

orange layer-cake. It is better than our fondest expectations and what is even more, there is enough for each of us to have two pieces!

By this time the sun is sinking behind Stratton and a purple glow is coming on all the mountains and surrounding hills. Great shafts of red and gold shoot up from the sun and the clouds over Monadnock in the east are rosy pink. Far and farther can we see into the north where range upon range of mountains are visible in the level light. Just as the sun sets, the full moon rises above Eagle Pond, and when the last glow of the setting sun has passed, the moon sheds its silver beams over mountain, lake, valley and stream. The village shines in the moonlight, almost as clearly as if it were day. Smoke rises from the hospitable chimneys, the thrush gives a last evening call, a lamb bleats from a near-by fold, a wild creature rustles in the underbrush. The night belongs to these sounds. We are intruders, and on the path which the moon makes through the trees we turn our steps down the hill toward home.

WAYS OF ESCAPE

I AM absolutely alone in the house. Scarcely a sound is to be heard. I can see the smoke of a distant freight train across the intervening hills but I can not hear a throb of the engine or a clang of the locomotive bell. Even the portable saw-mill which has been devastating the country-side (happily for us not within the range of our vision) is quiet today. Can it be that it is repenting of its ruthlessness and will offend no more? I fear it is only preparing for more slaughtering further on. The village whose roofs and spires are glimmering in the sunlight, is, so far as I am concerned, as still as a mirage. The mountain is a blue such as I have rarely seen it before. I am not very accurate at describing colors, but I think that Gail would say, if she were here, that it is the blue of the French uniforms. But the mountain itself, whatever its varying color, is always silent in its majesty and does not reply even when thunder bolts threaten. The canoes glide on the water of the nearer pond as quietly

as if they were birds on the wing, and at this distance the paddles make no more sound than if they were dipped by an Indian approaching his quarry on the shore. The lowing of the cattle and the tinkle of the bells on their sleek necks rise from the ravine where the cows are feeding, but they do not disturb the silence. Far on the top of one of the highest neighboring hills is another herd of cattle, each animal, like G.P.R. James's perennial horseman, silhouetted against the sky, and just as still. I look out of the window and there is a grey squirrel with his plume-like tail curled over his back, eating a mushroom held in his paws and making no noise about it. At this distance the mushroom looks like a russula, it is too early yet for the campestris. A pair of towhees are teaching their nestlings to fly. They are excited by their new responsibilities and are flying hither and thither, but very quietly, pausing only long enough to feed a succulent worm to one of the offspring as a reward for strenuous but as yet rather futile efforts. The hermit thrushes are beginning to sing their transcendently beauti-

ful song which no human device can imitate and no words describe, but their music intensifies the silence rather than breaks it.

More and more I am alone as the day draws toward its close but I am not lonesome. Glad will I be of course when the family all return and the exploits of each are recounted in turn around the supper table. The fact that I am not actually alone and I know it probably keeps me from being lonesome. Yet for that luxurious feeling of being by oneself, that coquetting with loneliness as it were, I know of nothing that approaches certain places in the country. Here are ways of escape from our too insistent civilisation, our consciences overburdened with the things that we ought to have done and the things we ought not to have done, our pleasures that tire rather than refresh, the high-pitched voices that rasp our weary nerves, the telephone that is never still, the honk of the motor horn that stops not night or day, the children's lessons which seem devised to plague the adult as well as the adolescent brain, those twin bugbears marks and

morals, and above all else the necessity for keeping the wolf from the door. Here if anywhere in this materialistic age, (and what age since Eve picked the apple and gave it to Adam to eat has not been materialistic,) here in this remote spot is to be found the place and the mood to escape into something larger than one's self and to know the lone soul and the lone God. An ignorance of either is the great misfortune that can come, invited or uninvited, into human life.

I know that every one does not agree with me in my particular way of escape from my own ever present personality and from my absorbing place in life. I have just been reading a book first printed sixty or seventy years ago, and long out of print, called 'Aguecheek.' It has recently been revised, reprinted and edited under the title 'My Unknown Chum.' It is a book of travels and miscellaneous essays, and considering the years since it was written, is remarkably fresh and interesting today. I find myself largely in agreement with all the anonymous writer says except that I disagree

heartily with his preference for cities over the country if one wishes to escape from every thing and everybody including oneself. He is a veritable cockney and prefers the solitariness and the oblivion to present responsibilities and the obliteration of the individual which he finds in the sights, the sounds and confusion of large cities. He writes charmingly of the country, so he is not close kin of that historic lady who so objected to the fields and woods that when a friend told her she was going to the country for a few weeks, she made the classic request, 'Kick a tree for me.' He never, I am sure, kicked a tree but I am equally sure that he always preferred a lamp-post and now since lamp-posts are things of the past I am confident that he would feel kindly toward a telephone pole.

Cities are not for me when I want to escape, especially strange cities. They are embodiments of the things that I want to get away from, and as for loneliness, I do not play with it or it with me when I am in an unfamiliar city. There is no coquetry about my loneli-

ness. I am just plain, stark, staring alone. Instead of forgetting myself and my own affairs, I am more than ever absorbed by them, because no one about me cares a hoot whether I exist or have any affairs or not. I look into the faces of the passers-by and am made more miserable and lonely still. I do not mind being alone but I want to choose to be alone. I do not want to have every individual I meet apparently shout in ever increasing volume, 'you're alone, Alone, ALONE!' If I see what is a familiar face and in good Shakespearian terms, 'acost it,' I doubtless make a mistake, or if the owner of the face *is* a veritable acquaintance, he is not over zealous to acknowledge the acquaintanceship and says, 'Hullo! how do you happen to be here?' and moves on without giving me time to answer him or to say incidentally that I have as good a right to be there as he has. Of course all is different when I am in what is known by the popular but ugly phrase, 'my home-town.' However, if I want to be actually, joyously, ecstatically alone without being lonesome,

let me be amid the surroundings wherein I am at present.

Yet *chacun à son goût.* Europe offers to thousands ways of escape, and I willingly admit that the change of scene, the different customs, the unfamiliar architecture, in some cases the garb of the foreigners have an irresistible power to take one out of oneself. The eye of the traveller is more observant than that of him who always stays at home, and although the scenes may not be so dear to him as the familiar ways and objects of his native land, they are for a time more stimulating and absorbing.

But I have known foreign travel to fail to take a man out of himself and other skies find him no different from the skies under which he was born and has lived. It is a trite remark that if a man is determined to take his cares and responsibilities and his anxieties with him wherever he goes, there is little hope for him and one place is as good as another. Mere locomotion, by what ever means, does not offer a way of escape from himself, and from all that

self implies. Some trivial, accidental thing will often accomplish what an elaborately planned flight away from the familiar will fail utterly to achieve.

I have a friend whom the beauty of the Bay of Naples, the resources of the city and even a most excellent hotel failed to make forget his responsibilities in the community which he was supposed to leave for a time behind. He was a somewhat self-conscious individual who took himself and his profession far too seriously. I often told him so but to no purpose. By the way, he was a clergyman, but not a clergyman by the way. He was always in the middle of the road and never allowed any affairs of his parishioners, particularly if they were unhappy affairs, to pass him. He held up every one who had any claim upon him and many who had none at all and asked what the trouble was all about and what he could do to help. Of course much of the time he was on the ragged edge of a nervous break-down, and tried foreign travel somewhat ineffectively as a way of escape. I used to say to him, 'You

carry your church around with you in your pocket as if it were a watch and every time you look at it, you see only the face of the clock on the steeple at home and begin to torture yourself with the thought that the steeple-clock may be a little fast or a little slow and that it is obviously your duty to go home and set it and any other things right that may be wrong.' I might as well have talked to the moon, better in fact, because I would have enjoyed it more and would not have expected results. But the day of reckoning came and he found his way of escape through the door of a little glove-shop in an out-of-the-way street in Naples. Perhaps because it was out-of-the-way it furnished him with a way out. Any way he summoned up his courage and went into the shop and bought himself a pair of yellow chamois skin gloves. He never would have done such an *outré* thing as that in Boston, or New York or Chicago, no, not even in San Francisco. Yellow kid gloves were absolutely foreign to his personality and of course they were taboo to his profession, but when he put

them on, he became at once another man. I would not say that he became a better or a worse man. He merely was different and what he needed was to be different. From that moment Naples, Vesuvius, Capri, Sardinia, Pompeii, all seemed to him more beautiful and all because he had slipped away from himself and his care and responsibilities and was swinging along at a lively pace, his hands encased in yellow kid gloves.

I have another friend who never leaves his house without carrying a cane. It is of the hooked-handle variety and I can always tell the state of my friend's mind and spirits by the way he holds his beloved walking stick. If it is hooked on his arm, I know that the world is too much with him, and for the time is getting the better of him. He is anxious, and oppressed by some weight of introspection or some other cause for unhappiness. If, however, he carries the handle of his stick in his hand and swings it vigorously forward and back in rhythm with his step, I know that he is not, this morning at least, cribbed, cabined

and confined, but his personality is liberated and enlarged, his stick is a symbol of his freedom and with the end of it he touches a wider world. He, too, has found his way of escape. Just what way it is, I do not know, but I am always aware when he has found it.

That reminds me of Gail's friend Mrs. Cartwright whom Gail has befriended more by counsel and actual friendship than by any material gifts. Gail is in the habit of saying that if you want to help people you must be willing to help them in their way rather than in your own. You must not so much make a plan for them as you must find out their own plan and then help them to carry it out. I rather think she is right. She has carried it to a successful issue in Mrs. Cartwright's case.

The other day Mrs. Cartwright came toiling up our hill with a large bundle under her arm. Gail was not at home and she was evidently greatly disappointed, but she consented to sit down and 'visit' with me, a poor substitute I fully realized. When she had recovered her breath after the long climb she said, 'I am

mighty sorry not to see your wife, but you give her these two loaves of bread that I hev just baked and tell her that I had ter do somethin' just to show her how grateful I be for all she done fer me.' 'I know she has done very little, Mrs. Cartwright,' I protested, 'and if she has been able to help you in any way, I know it has made her very happy.' 'That's just it,' she continued, 'that's the wonder of it. Do yer know, I don't serpose yer do because yer only a man, but she is just like a clothes-pole. I told some one the other day that that is what I call her: "My clothes-pole." When I am tired and discouraged and she comes and talks to me it lifts all my worries up high the way a clothes-pole lifts the wet clothes. Yes, that's the change that comes over me when yer wife comes to see me. I can't seem to express it in any other way. I am all dragged out and as disconsolate as wet clothes look on the line when there ain't no wind, and then when I see yer wife coming up the road, I am all set up, and the wind is a blowin' and all is as right as it oughter to be. Well, I must be goin'. 'Twill

be time to get the children's supper by the time I get home. I'm awful sorry not ter find yer wife ter home, but yer give her my respec's along o' the bread and say I wished I could do a lot more.' As I watched her slight but strong figure go down the hill until it disappeared behind the spruce trees at the turn of the path, I said to myself 'I wonder if Mrs. Cartwright is not one of Gail's ways of escape and if these loaves of bread are not one of Mrs. Cartwright's ways out.'